

# socialist standard

October 2015  
Vol. 111 No. 1334  
£1.50

Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement

## Diaspora

Capitalism's refugee crisis



Jez - can he?  
page 9



Peter Watkins'  
reel life  
page 14



The trouble with  
truth  
page 16

# socialist standard

OCTOBER 2015  
contents

## FEATURES

<b>Oil, regime change &amp; refugees</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TTIP: profits before people</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Peter Watkins - a revolutionary film-maker</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Truths and half-truths</b>	<b>16</b>

## REGULARS

<b>Pathfinders</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Halo Halo!</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Material World</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Greasy Pole</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Mixed Media</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Proper Gander</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Meetings</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>50 Years Ago</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Action Replay</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Voice from the Back</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Free Lunch</b>	<b>24</b>

All original material is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-ND 2.0 UK) licence.

## The Socialist Party

52 Clapham High Street,  
London SW4 7UN

Tel: 0207 622 3811

Email: [spgb@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb@worldsocialism.org)

Website: [www.worldsocialism.org/spgb](http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb)

Blog: <http://socialismoryourmoneyback.blogspot.com/>

## SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS

should be sent to the address above.

**RATES:** One year subscription (normal rate) £15. One year subscription (low/unwaged) £10. Europe rate £20 (Air mail). Rest of world £25 (Air mail). Voluntary supporters subscription £20 or more. Cheques payable to 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain'.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on **Saturday 7 November** at the address above. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the Editorial Committee.

## Contact Details

SPGB Media: [spgb.media@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb.media@worldsocialism.org)

### UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS

#### LONDON

**North London branch.** Meets 3rd Thursday 8pm at Torriano Meeting House, 99 Torriano Ave, NW5 2RX

Contact: [chris.dufton@talktalk.net](mailto:chris.dufton@talktalk.net) or 020 7609 0983

**South London branch.** Meets 1st Tues. 7.00pm. Head Office. 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN. Tel: 020 7622 3811

**West London branch.** Meets 1st & 3rd Tues. 8pm. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace (corner Sutton Court Rd), W4. Corres: 51 Gayford Road, London W12 9BY. Tel: 020 8740 6677. Email: [tenner@abelgratis.com](mailto:tenner@abelgratis.com)

#### MIDLANDS

**West Midlands Regional branch.** Meets last Sunday of the month, 3.00pm, the Briar Rose pub, 25 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RE. (Check before attending). E-Mail: [vincent.otter@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:vincent.otter@globalnet.co.uk). Tel: 01242 675357

#### East Midlands

Contact: Gareth Whitley - Email: [gwhitley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gwhitley@hotmail.co.uk)

#### NORTHEAST

**Northeast branch.** Contact: Vin Maratty, 22 Greystoke Avenue, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 9DS, tel: 01915 250 002. Email: [vinmaratty@googlemail.com](mailto:vinmaratty@googlemail.com).

#### NORTHWEST

**Lancaster branch.** Meets each 3rd Sunday 3.00pm. P. Shannon. Tel: 01524 382380

Email: [spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org)

**Manchester branch.** Paul Bennett, 6 Burleigh Mews, Hardy Lane, M21 7LB. Tel: 0161 860 7189

**Bolton.** Tel: H. McLaughlin. 01204 844589

**Cumbria.** Brendan Cummings, 19 Queen St, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4BG

**Southeast Manchester.** Enquiries: Blanche Preston, 68 Fountains Road, M32 9PH

#### YORKSHIRE

**Yorkshire Regional Branch:** Edward Craggs, Sutton Farm, Aldborough, Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, YO51 9ER. Tel: 01423 322781  
Email: [Ralph.craggs@gmail.com](mailto:Ralph.craggs@gmail.com)

#### SOUTH/SOUTHEAST/SOUTHWEST

**Kent and Sussex Regional branch.** Meets second Sunday every month at 2.00pm at The Muggleton Inn, High Street, Maidstone ME14 1HJ.

Email: [spgb.ksrb@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb.ksrb@worldsocialism.org)  
Tel: 07973 142701.

**South West Regional branch.** Meets 2nd Saturday of each month in the Railway Tavern, Salisbury, 2.00pm (check before attending). Shane Roberts, 86 High Street, Bristol BS5 6DN. Tel: 0117 9511199

**Brighton Discussion Group** - Anton Pruden, email: [anton@pruden.me](mailto:anton@pruden.me)

**Canterbury.** Rob Cox, 4 Stanhope Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6AB

**Luton.** Nick White, 59 Heywood Drive, LU2 7LP

**Redruth.** Harry Sowden, 5 Clarence Villas, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 1PB.

Tel: 01209 219293

#### EAST ANGLIA

**East Anglian Regional branch.** Meets on the second Saturday on alternate months (see meetings page for details).

Pat Deutz, 11 The Links, Billericay, CM12 0EX. n.deutz@btinternet.com

David Porter, Eastholme, Bush Drive, Eccles-on-Sea, NR12 0SF.

Tel: 01692 582533.

Richard Headicar, 42 Woodcote, Firs Rd, Hethersett, NR9 3JD. Tel: 01603 814343.

**Cambridge.** Andrew Westley, 10 Marksby Close, Duxford, Cambridge CB2 4RS.

Tel: 07890343044

#### IRELAND

**Cork:** Kevin Cronin, 5 Curragh Woods, Frankfield, Cork. Tel: 021 4896427. Email: [mariekev@eircom.net](mailto:mariekev@eircom.net)

**Newtownabbey:** Nigel McCullough. Tel: 028 90852062.

#### SCOTLAND

**Edinburgh branch.** Meets 1st Thur. 7.00-9.00pm. The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh. J. Moir. Tel: 0131 440 0995.

[JIMMY@jmoir29.freemove.co.uk](mailto:JIMMY@jmoir29.freemove.co.uk) Branch website:

<http://geocities.com/edinburghbranch/>  
**Glasgow branch.** Meets 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8pm in Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow. Peter Hendrie, 75 Lairhills Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0LH. Tel: 01355 903105. Email: [peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk).

**Dundee.** Ian Ratcliffe, 12 Finlow Terrace Dundee, DD4 9NA, Tel 01382 698297

**Ayrshire.** Paul Edwards. Tel: 01563 541138. Email: [rainbow3@btopenworld.com](mailto:rainbow3@btopenworld.com)

**Lothian Socialist Discussion @Autonomous** Centre Edinburgh, ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA. Meets 4th Wednesday of each month 7.30-9.00pm. Tel: F.Anderson 07724 082753.

#### WALES

**Swansea branch.** Meets 2nd Mon, 7.30pm, Unitarian Church, High Street. Corres: Geoffrey Williams, 19 Baptist Well Street, Waun Wen, Swansea SA1 6FB.

Tel: 01792 643624

**Cardiff and District.** Corres: Richard Botterill, 21 Pen-Y-Bryn Rd, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 3LG. Tel: 02920-615826 Email: [botterillr@gmail.com](mailto:botterillr@gmail.com)

**INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS**

#### Latin America

J.M. Morel, Calle 7 edif 45 apto 102, Multis nuevo La loteria, La Vega, Rep. Dominicana.

#### AFRICA

**Kenya.** Patrick Ndege, PO Box 78105, Nairobi.

**Swaziland.** Mandla Ntshakala, PO Box 981, Manzini.

**Zambia.** Kephass Mulenga, PO Box 280168, Kitwe.

#### ASIA

**Japan.** Michael. Email: [japan.wsm@gmail.com](mailto:japan.wsm@gmail.com)

#### AUSTRALIA

Trevor Clarke, [wspa.info@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wspa.info@yahoo.com.au)

#### EUROPE

**Denmark.** Graham Taylor, Kjaerslund 9, floor 2 (middle), DK-8260 Viby J

**Germany.** Norbert.

E-mail: [weltsocialismus@gmx.net](mailto:weltsocialismus@gmx.net)

**Norway.** Robert Stafford.

Email: [hallblithe@yahoo.com](mailto:hallblithe@yahoo.com)

**Italy.** Gian Maria Freddi, Via Felice Casorati n. 6A, 37131 Verona

**Spain.** Alberto Gordillo, Avenida del Parque 2/2/3 Puerta A, 13200 Manzanares.

#### COMPANION PARTIES OVERSEAS

**Socialist Party of Canada/Parti Socialiste du Canada.** Box 4280, Victoria B.C. V8X 3X8 Canada.

Email: [SPC@iname.com](mailto:SPC@iname.com)

**World Socialist Party (India)** 257 Baghajatin 'E' Block (East), Kolkata - 700086, Tel: 033-2425-0208, Email: [wspindia@hotmail.com](mailto:wspindia@hotmail.com)

**World Socialist Party (New Zealand)** P.O. Box 1929, Auckland, NI, New Zealand.

**World Socialist Party of the United States** P.O. Box 440247, Boston, MA 02144 USA.

Email: [boston@wspus.org](mailto:boston@wspus.org)



# Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity

to make new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our

ideas across, the more experiences we will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

**If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.**



## Editorial

# socialist standard

OCTOBER 2015

## The Refugee Crisis

OVER THE past few months, Europe has been facing the biggest influx of refugees since the Second World War. They have been fleeing the war zones of the Middle East and North Africa. The biggest group are those trying to escape the particularly brutal civil war in Syria. The major Powers have had a hand in creating this crisis by fomenting conflicts in these regions. The US and British military intervention there has created political instability in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Syria, Russia and Iran are supplying arms to the Assad regime and American and French drones are bombing Isis targets. British drones have joined in attacking Isis targets in Iraq and David Cameron hopes to persuade Parliament later this year to approve British drones being used in Syria. In 2011, Britain and France undertook the bombing of Libya, which has led to the present unstable situation there that has induced many to make the hazardous journey across the Mediterranean.

Rather than receiving the help they need, these desperate people have had obstacles put in their way. In Hungary razor-wire fencing has been built along its border with Serbia and the police have been tear gassing refugees trying to enter the country. Unable to enter the European countries legally, they have had to resort to paying human traffickers to transport them in unsafe boats to European destinations such as Greece and Italy. About 2,500 have died while attempting to make the crossing. On 27 August, 71 refugees were found dead in an abandoned lorry in Austria near the Hungarian border. Some refugees have been killed trying to reach Britain from Calais via the Channel Tunnel.

We are not encouraged to see them as fellow human beings, but as a menace. They are 'economic migrants', who seek to sponge off the good people of Europe. Philip Hammond, the Foreign Secretary, complains of 'millions

of marauding African migrants' posing a threat to the EU's standard of living and David Cameron talks of a 'swarm' of migrants crossing the Mediterranean to come to Britain. Katie Hopkins, the great sage of *The Sun*, tells us that migrants are like cockroaches. We have been reliably informed by the *Daily Mail* that British tourists in the island of Kos in Greece have had their holidays ruined by the presence of refugees there. There have been calls by some politicians and some of the press to send the British Army to deal with the refugee crisis in Calais.

However, this all changed when images of the body of three-year old Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian refugee, washed up on a Turkish beach, appeared in the world press and shamed European countries into taking action. Germany has since pledged to take in 800,000 refugees this year. David Cameron, who previously took a hard line against accepting more refugees in the UK, has relented and agreed to accept a further 20,000 refugees over the next five years. It has to be said that these pledges are not entirely altruistic. Germany's population is falling and it needs an intake of younger workers to support an ageing population. British employers will, no doubt, find good uses for the skills of these newcomers.

Socialists are heartened by the solidarity shown by workers across Europe, in Germany, Austria and Hungary in welcoming the refugees to their countries with offers of food and drink and toys for the children.

We can only look forward to the day when workers extend their solidarity and work together to abolish capitalism, the system which creates the need for war and the resulting human suffering, and establish a socialist society which does away with all divisions between human beings and the conflicts which give rise to these harrowing tragedies.

## Robots of the world – you have nothing to lose but your blockchains

THE BOSSES own the means of production – that's what makes them bosses. So what will happen when the means of production own themselves? Er, come again? Yes, we are talking about automated intelligent production and distribution systems, managing themselves, recycling their income back into their own maintenance programmes, entirely without human agency. You call a cab, the cab turns up and it takes you (yes, it's driverless) where you want to go, debits your online account, and uses that income to buy its next 10 gallons of fuel and pay its automated garage cleaning and servicing subscription.

This is the world of the blockchain, an automated self-management security system which has been crucial so far to the success of Bitcoins (*New Scientist*, 12 September). By keeping track of every single transaction within the Bitcoin economy, the blockchain is able to prevent anyone conjuring up new 'money' out of nothing (as banks are alleged to do by currency cranks), thus avoiding financial melt-down. Cynics would point to the very large thefts of Bitcoins which have in the past almost sunk the system, but blaming the blockchain for what criminals do would be like blaming the bank for sponsoring bank robbers. Now new applications are being developed to apply blockchains to other fields of endeavour, with the utopian idea that ultimately the bosses will be abolished and the world will run itself.

Except that it's not the bosses – the owners - who will be abolished, only their managers. Sitting above the entire global production factory of human-termites overseen by machine-gangers and cyber-foremen will be that same class of obscenely-privileged fat fucks which already exists today, only with even more wealth and even less to do to keep it.

There's been much paranoia recently about the dangers of runaway AI and breathless speculation about Terminator-like scenarios where the robots take over and kill us all. Much of this was caused by Professor Stephen Hawking who seems overly fond of giving the greedy press tasty soundbites in the manner of Dad's Army's lugubrious Private Frazer grunting 'We're all doomed'. But robots would only do what we told them to do, and it seems hard to imagine why we'd build ones that didn't. Even if out of sheer laziness we built ones that made all our decisions for us (like politicians?), it seems equally hard to see what possible motive they might have in wanting to kill us off, unless we unintentionally designed them with the psychopathic tendencies of an average multinational corporation. What's much more likely is that we are the ones who are dooming ourselves by behaving like the very robots we're so afraid of. From this perspective, devising a way to lock ourselves permanently into a future of automated robotic slavery, where the real robots are us and not the machines, seems quite a plausible way forward for capitalism. Let's see, what does 'robot' mean again? Oh yeah, that's right. 'Worker.'

### Sex and a cigarette

If we're putting robots out of jobs by doing the jobs ourselves, does that make the robots redundant? Apparently it's not game over for them while they can still resort to the oldest game. There is a burgeoning industry in sex robot design and manufacture. Some prototypes are in development and some primitive models, costing around £5,000 each, are already reaching the market, though more as

a proof of principle than in the expectation of any serious sales.

It may sound like science fiction, but this has been looming for years. Henrik Christensen of the European Robotics Research Network announced to a surprised *Sunday Times* reporter in June 2006 that 'people are going to be having sex with robots within five years' (source: Wikipedia). As it turned out this was a somewhat premature ejaculation on his part, but nonetheless things have moved on to the point where now two academics are calling for the banning of sex robots (BBC News, 15 September).

The argument boils down to a fear that the machines will objectify women, which is to say further objectify women. Underneath this rather vague claim lurks a darker implication, that the ability to do vile and unspeakable things to a robot will foreshadow a desire to do those things to real women. This idea, not unfamiliar from video game debates, is further sensationalised by the inclusion of children in the argument. Since no known child sex robots are under development, the obvious intention is to bury rational debate under a mountain of moral outrage.

What are the real grounds for such fears? Would users of these devices be more or less likely to see women or children in a dehumanised way? Might it make no difference, or indeed might it go the other way, with women and children finding themselves freed from potential sexual predators and thus enjoying greater net safety in society?

It's impossible to say because the robots don't exist yet. In the circumstances, demanding a ban seems perverse, and it's hard not to suspect a moral 'Yuk' factor at work, trumping every other consideration. Such people don't care what the facts are, and don't care about millions of lonely inadequate men and women who might benefit, they just know that sex robots are 'wrong'.

An oddly parallel argument is raging right now over e-cigarettes. The British Medical Association and the World Health Organisation have come out against them, arguing that there is no good evidence that they result in reduction or cessation of cigarette smoking (and conversely may even encourage it). Following their lead, many countries and organisations are banning them from public places, and all sorts of restrictions on sales are being imposed. On the other side, the 'vapers' are furious at what they see as victimisation. They are trying to give up the demon weed, as they see it, by using something incontestably less dangerous than tobacco, and instead of lending support the BMA and others are absurdly trying to create difficulties for them. There is no good evidence of benefit in the case of coffee, or chocolate, or weekends in Cornwall. Society doesn't and shouldn't automatically ban things on the basis of some dubious 'precautionary principle'. If it did that we'd never have climbed out of the trees in the first place.

Has the BMA overstepped its authority? Vapers, at least those with a sense of social responsibility, are not demanding the right to vape in public places if it's going to annoy other people. But equally they feel affronted at being the subject of a ban imposed without any substantive evidence of harm. People are not banned from wearing suffocatingly bad perfume despite its known harm to asthmatics. People are not banned from Tube trains if they have excessive BO. People are not banned from farting in lifts. Or from driving diesel cars. The BMA's position seems to be that, regardless of the facts, smoking or vaping is just 'wrong'.

A society that bans things first and asks questions later, or perhaps never, is not a society aiming to encourage open-mindedness in its citizens and in its debates. For socialists, the prospects for rational debate about socialism thereby diminish, and that's something that should have everyone fuming.

**PJS**





# News from India

Letter sent to the Calcutta paper The Statesman.

IN THE evening of August 23 in the Sunday Discussion Meeting of our party, the World Socialist Party (India), we read with interest the Saturday *Statesman*, August 22, article 'Relevance of Marx' written by Professor Gargi Sengupta (see <http://www.thestatesman.com/mobi/news/opinion/relevance-of-marx/84255.html>). It is really heartening to note that a nineteenth century communist revolutionary, Karl Marx, is being revisited by the 21<sup>st</sup> century mainstream press to find answers to the present-day woes and worries. Hopefully, this signals the beginning of Marx's media-ride in India too.

This happens because, as Marx and Engels themselves observed, 'consciousness can sometimes appear further advanced than the contemporary empirical conditions, so that in the struggles of a later epoch one can refer to earlier theoreticians as authorities' (*The German Ideology*). 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past' wrote Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

In her appreciation in defence of Marx, Gargi Sengupta has rightly claimed that 'Marxism enables us to understand the nature of the capitalist crisis,' and also that 'Marx believed that human development requires a cooperative society based on common ownership of the means of production.'

She has excellently pronounced, 'The overall significance of religion may have declined, but the family, the schools, and the capitalist controlled mass media continue to brainwash the working class and prevent them from realizing their true destiny'.

Her observation: 'From a global perspective, a class-based analysis is still relevant,' holds up one of the basic principles of Marxism. She defends Marx for 'making a very fundamental contribution' whereby 'He placed human beings and their conscious, purposive activity – human labour – at the centre of his analysis' and also for a 'unique contribution' – the role of 'class struggle' in 'human historical development'. She is right in pointing out that 'Marx's writings still evoke interest

across the world. ... Marx's writings can throw light on the problems of our age'. Simply because, as Marx viewed, 'The nature of capital remains the same in its developed as in its undeveloped form'; and 'Production of surplus value is the absolute law of this mode of production' (*Capital*, Volume I).

Actually, Marx is more relevant today than ever before.

This said, I would like to comment on a couple of inaccuracies in Professor Sengupta's article. She says, 'Marx visualized the remedy in violent revolution followed by decades of civil and international warfare.' This is a half-truth. True, in his early years Marx held a 'violent revolution' view. However, eventually and finally he arrived at the following conclusion: 'Proletariat – organized in a separate political party. That such organization must be pursued by all the means which the proletariat has at its disposal, including universal suffrage, thus transformed from the instrument of trickery, which it has been up till now into an instrument of emancipation' (written on about May 10, 1880, printed according to *L'Egalité*, no. 24, June 30, 1880, checked with the text of *Le Précurseur*).

Secondly, in portraying capitalism as only a 'private enterprise' system she has missed the yardstick of defining state capitalism – the defining characteristic of which is state ownership and control of the means of production and articles for distribution. As a result she is mistaken in recognizing the erstwhile so-called 'communist' dictatorial and despotic state capitalist regimes of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. How could there be 'the eclipse of communism' when communism (socialism the same) has nowhere and never been attempted at all? Just what happened in these countries was appropriately described in 1918 by Fitzgerald of the Socialist Party of Great Britain: 'What justification is there, then, for terming the upheaval in Russia a Socialist Revolution? None whatever beyond the fact that the leaders in the November movement claim to be Marxian Socialists' (*Socialist Standard*, August 1918).

**BINAY SARKAR**

## Class-free, State-free

In English, words of the form X-less mean 'without X'; examples would be *homeless*, *jobless*, *loveless*, *useless*, *pointless*. As you may have noticed, these words generally have a negative meaning, since the X part is seen as something good, whether a home or a use. There are exceptions, such as *painless*, but on the whole it's true.

In contrast, words consisting of X-free have positive meanings: *trouble-free*, *problem-free*, *fat-free*, *cholesterol-free*. Here the X denotes something negative, so to be without it is a good thing.

Socialists often describe socialism as a classless, stateless, moneyless world community. But, based on what we've said above, it might be better to say it would be class-free, state-free, money-free, putting an explicitly positive spin on these ideas.

Socialist society will be free of the encumbrances of class, the state and money, leaving people to co-operate without institutions that oppress and exploit.

You might object that it doesn't matter very much whether we speak of a classless or a class-free society. This may be correct, but the point is that using slightly unusual terms such as *class-free* and *state-free* may help those who hear our case to think a little about what they mean and what some of the implications about a changeover to socialism would be.

**PB**





## Need a New Bike? Want to Destroy the Devil?

YOU HEARD, perhaps, about the little boy sitting on his doorstep one Sunday morning crying his eyes out. 'What's the matter?' asked the vicar as he passed on his way to church. 'I want a bike' sobbed the little boy, 'All my friends have got one and I haven't'. 'Have you tried praying for a bike?' asked the vicar. 'Prayer is a wonderful thing. It can solve all your problems'.

So for the following week the little boy prayed every morning, but the next Sunday when the vicar passed there he was again, still in tears, and still without a bike.

'You must have faith' said the vicar, 'and don't stop praying. Prayers can solve all your problems'. So the little boy carried on praying every morning and sure enough, a couple of weeks later when the vicar passed, there was the little boy on his doorstep with a big smile on his face, and a beautiful, brand new, shiny red bike.

'What did I tell you?' said the vicar. 'Isn't prayer a wonderful thing?' 'Yes', said the little boy. 'You were right. Prayers can solve all your problems'. 'What happened?' asked the vicar. 'Well I prayed really hard every morning' said the little boy, 'just like you said, but by Friday I still didn't have a bike so I went out and stole one. Then I prayed to God to forgive me. And he did'.

Getting a new bike, though, would be a piece of cake for real believers. For the more ambitious there are numerous books available that explain, for a few dollars a go, not only how to make sure God is paying attention when you list your requirements, but how to beat the living daylight out of Satan while you're at it.

You could start with 'Discerning the Voice of God' (\$11.69). 'Do you feel that the ability to hear God's voice is for other people and not for you?' asks its author. Don't worry. With a little practice anyone can get into conversation with the voices in their head.

Or how about, 'Prayers for Victory in Spiritual Warfare?' (\$10.59) 'The enemy of your soul has gained the upper hand', we are told. But again, nothing to worry about. 'God has given you powerful weapons to help you withstand the onslaught of Satan's lies'.

And don't miss 'Fervent: A Woman's Battle Plan to Serious, Specific and Strategic Prayer' (\$10.05) by Priscilla Shirer who, the advertising blurb assures us, is a 'Prayer warrior'.

'You have an enemy' we are told, 'and he's dead set on destroying all you hold dear. This book is your chance to strike back. With prayer. With a weapon that really works. Each chapter will guide you in crafting prayer strategies that hit the enemy where it hurts'.

Blimey, that's a bit strong. We assume Priscilla the Prayer Warrior's number one enemy is the devil, but aren't Prayer Warriors supposed to love their enemies? This makes those Catholic exorcisms that come complete with candles, a crucifix and garlic, look like a picnic in the park. Still, if you can get a new bike out of it...

NW



God helps those who help themselves...

## SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

WORTH  
£9.95

# FREE

## SOCIALISM OR YOUR MONEY BACK

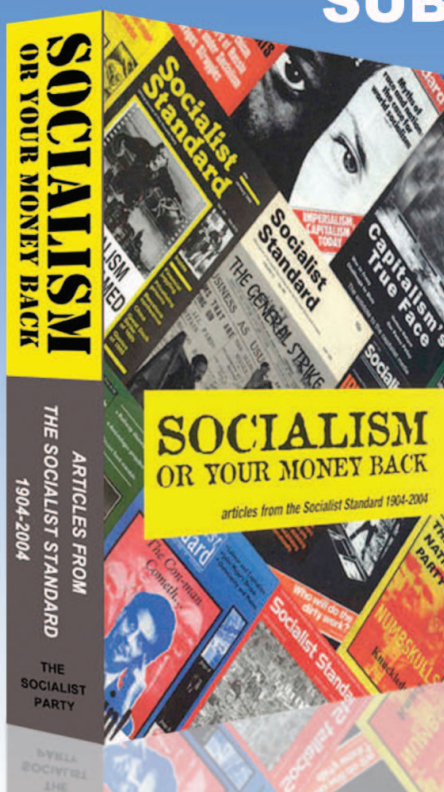
Articles from the *Socialist Standard* 1904 - 2004. A running commentary of 100 years of capitalist history by a socialist journal.

Two World Wars The Russian Revolution The Rise of Hitler  
The Spanish Civil War Hiroshima The Silicon Chip Pop Music  
...and much more

WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO  
the **socialist standard**

*This collection will revive a jaundiced spirit... Every home should have one.*

THE INDEPENDENT







## Islamist gold

'ISLAMIC STATE reveals new gold coins in bid to break the "enslavement" of capitalism' was the headline of a Yahoo!News ([tinyurl.com/oo3e9gn](http://tinyurl.com/oo3e9gn)) report on a propaganda video IS released at the end of August. Entitled *The Rise of the Khalifah and the Return to the Gold Dinar*, the video announced the Islamic State's plan to introduce a new currency in the areas of Iraq and Syria under its control, or, rather, to reintroduce the currency that had circulated there over 1300 years ago. The gold dinar will weigh the same as then, about 4.25 gm, and according to the video will be worth about \$139, or £91. As this will be of no use for everyday transactions there will also be a silver dirham, worth \$1, and various small denomination copper coins.

The video wasn't just about returning to the past. It also contained a criticism of the financial system that has developed over the past three or four hundred years in the West and elsewhere. By all accounts, this criticism echoes familiar currency crank objections to 'money as debt', fractional reserve banking and the US Federal Reserve, which the video denounced as 'satanic'. It is this system that it describes as 'capitalist' and 'enslaving' people and depriving them 'of their due'.

In short, it echoes the currency crank theory that we are exploited today by banks by having to earn money to pay interest to them. The Islamic State is 'anti-capitalist' only in this limited and misleading sense. They are not opposed to capitalism in the more meaningful sense of production for profit based on the exploitation of wage-labour for surplus value. Far from it. Sharia Law accepts the private ownership of means of production and permits and encourages profit-making, and has developed various convoluted ways of paying the equivalent of interest.

Nor is capitalism incompatible with the circulation of gold and silver coins. Until WW1 this was generally the case. And there are open supporters of capitalism – Ron Paul springs to mind – who, while not wanting to go back as far as 713, still want to go back to 1913.

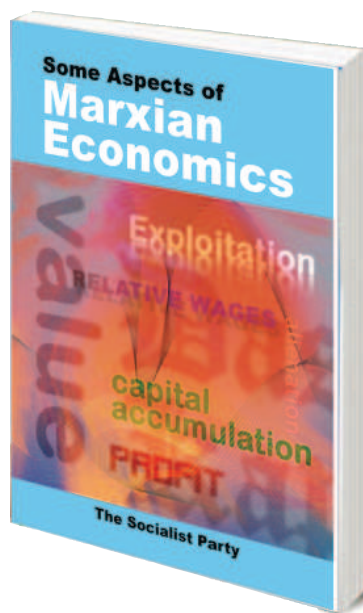
Meanwhile in another part of Syria something quite different is reported to be happening. In the mountains in the North controlled by the YPG, an affiliate of the Kurdish Nationalist PKK, they are said to be implementing ideas developed latterly by the imprisoned PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and introducing a system there where 'the concept of money is internally redundant'. An enthusiastic supporter writes ([tinyurl.com/obnyq6m](http://tinyurl.com/obnyq6m)):

'The economic needs of the inhabitants of the KCK [Union of Communities in Kurdistan] system are internally supplied through a communal management of resources. Although money is utilised in economic dealings with external systems, internally the concept of money is inconceivable. No person or community within the KCK system feels the need to build a surplus of goods or resources. Surpluses are constantly redistributed, therefore, viably consumed. Reminiscent of pre-hierarchical and pre-exploitative societies, the KCK system adopts a culture of gifting, rather than a culture of exchange. The communal organisation of agriculture ensures a self-sufficient production and consumption of resources, therefore deeming surplus, exchange value and the commodification of goods irrelevant.'

We don't know if this really is happening but it sounds better. Rather forward, on a world scale and in conditions of abundance, to a society where money is redundant than backward to a time when gold and silver used to circulate as money.

## SOCIALIST PARTY PUBLICATIONS

### Some Aspects of Marxian Economics



A series of articles drawn from the *Socialist Standard* explaining the real nature of modern economic problems and the failure of 'conventional economics' to solve them.

To order this or any other publication from the list below, complete the order form and send it to the freepost address.

#### PUBLICATIONS ORDER FORM

##### PAMPHLETS (£2.50 each unless stated otherwise)

An Inconvenient Question: Socialism and The Environment: (£2.00) ☒

What's Wrong With Using Parliament? (£1.00) ☐

Ecology and Socialism ☐

From Capitalism to Socialism: how we live and how we could live ☐

Africa: A Marxian Analysis ☐

Socialism As a Practical Alternative ☐

Some Aspects of Marxian Economics: (£4.00) ☐

How the Gods Were Made ☐

Marxism and Darwinism by Anton Pannekoek ☐

How we Live and How we Might Live by William Morris ☐

Art, Labour and Socialism by William Morris ☐

The Right to be Lazy by Paul Lafargue ☐

Marxism Revisited: (£2.00) ☐

Socialist Principles Explained ☐

**All the above pamphlets (25% discount): £25.50.** ☐

##### BOOKS

Strange Meeting: Socialism and World War One: £4.50 ☐

A Socialist Life by Heather Ball: £3.75 ☐

Are We Prisoners Of Our Genes? £4.75 ☐

Socialism Or Your Money Back (reduced from £9.95): £4.00 ☐

**All the above books (25% discount): £12.00** ☐

##### DVD

Capitalism and Other Kids' Stuff: £5.75 ☐

Poles Apart? Capitalism or socialism as the planet heats up: £5.75 ☐

All prices include postage and packing. For six or more of any publication, reduce the price by one third.

Return this form along with your cheque or money order to:

**The Socialist Party of Great Britain, FREEPOST, London, SW4 7BR, United Kingdom.** (No postage necessary if mailed within the UK).

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

City.....

..... Postcode.....

County.....

PHONE (optional).....

E-MAIL (optional).....

# Exiled from Gardens of Eden

*'FIRST WE were dispossessed in the name of kings and emperors, later in the name of state development, and now in the name of conservation.'* A statement from the Indigenous peoples' Forum at an international conference in 2004.

JUST WHAT degree of naivety are we to believe existed among the normally politically savvy international conservation bodies such as London Zoo, Kew Gardens and even Greenpeace UK? They were fully aware of the well-publicised plight of the evicted Chagos Islanders, yet they didn't consider that the purpose behind Her Majesty's Government's initiative in setting up a vast marine reserve (exempting, of course, the huge American military base on Diego Garcia), may have been to further ensure the non-return of the native islanders. There was, in the words of the Chagos Conservation Trust, 'some controversy' over the removal of the local inhabitants but that merely involved compensation because the courts had upheld the legality of the expulsions. However their website is careful to omit that it was the use of the royal prerogative powers of the Privy Council which legalised the eviction.

The real sharks these august organisations were protecting were the sharks in Whitehall and the Pentagon, while the small fish they were failing to defend were the people who once lived on the Chagos Islands. A sordid but isolated tale, perhaps? Not so. This column has previously drawn attention to the Bushmen being excluded from their ancestral home on the pretext of conservation reserves which still welcomed diamond mines and tourist resorts yet not the indigenous people.

In fact, throughout the world conservationists have been collaborating with governments in the removal of people supposedly in the interests of nature conservation but more often than not, for political and/or pecuniary motives. In a 2004 meeting of the United Nations International Forum on Indigenous Mapping, all 200 delegates signed a declaration stating that the 'activities of conservation organizations now represent the single biggest threat to the integrity of indigenous lands.'

Great efforts are taken to conduct animal number censuses. The true figures for what Mark Dowie calls in his book 'conservation refugees' as in the title of his book *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples*, is more difficult to establish. If it can ever be known, it partly depends upon the semantics of words like 'eviction,' 'displacement', and 'refugee', and no one formally counts people displaced for the sake of environmental conservation, but they exist all over the world and have been

banished from lands they thrived on for hundreds, even thousands of years. In 1962, there were some 1,000 official 'protection areas' worldwide. Today there are 108,000 with more being added every day.

The total area of land now under conservation protection worldwide has doubled since 1990, when the World Parks Commission set a goal of protecting 10 percent of the planet's surface. That goal has been exceeded, with over 12 percent of all land, a total area of 11.75 million square miles, now classified as protected by governments and conservation groups. That's an area greater than the entire land mass of Africa.

The locals who have been pushed off their lands could be as high as twenty million. Charles Geisler, a sociologist at Cornell University who has studied displacements in Africa, is certain the number on that continent alone exceeds 14 million. During the 1990s the African nation of Chad increased the amount of national land under protection from 0.1 to 9.1 percent. All of that land had been previously inhabited by what are now an estimated six hundred thousand conservation refugees. No other country besides India, which officially admits to 1.6 million, is even counting this growing new class of refugees. A study by Harrison Esam Awuh recorded approximately 3,058,000 conservation refugees, making up 28 different indigenous groups, displaced across 48 protected areas.

Across the world millions of people – the majority of them indigenous – have been illegally evicted from their ancestral homelands in the name of conservation. Many evictions have been brutal, with little or no warning. Communities who once hunted or grazed livestock within the boundaries of nature reserves find themselves labelled squatters or branded as poachers. Whether they lose their land to conservation or other 'developments' such as mining, their once self-sufficient lives and livelihoods are destroyed. In the name of environmental protection conservationists have participated in the expulsion and the attempted cultural extinction of indigenous peoples the world over.

In the words of one Indian tiger reserve guard justifying the need to relocate the locals:

'These Gujjars don't want to work. Gujjars are lazy. Their women work while they eat posht. They don't want to move out because they want everything for free. They would never agree to leave this place because they wouldn't find free fodder and income outside Sariska. Therefore they need to be evicted from the forest forcefully if this sanctuary has to be saved.'

**ALJO**





# What it was all about

his meeting at the Town Hall on Wednesday. If I can get in, that is; he's had thousands at his other meetings with overflows so I might have to stand outside'. Jeremy Corbyn. A couple of months before none of them had heard of him but now it was different. Janet told about a friend of a friend who is one of his constituents; they admire his rebelliousness in parliament, where he has voted against the whips' instructions over 500 times (they called it 'challenges') and he was very helpful to her when she took a particular problem to him. At all events he couldn't be much worse than Ed Miliband and that lot who lost the last election. And who were those Labour MPs against him? That Liz Kendall saying she loved Labour but talking more like a proper Tory. What had Andy Burnham ever done to make us think of him as a future Prime Minister? Yvette Cooper? won't she just perform like Ed Balls tells her to? And Blair having the cheek to prescribe a heart transplant for anyone who voted for Corbyn .

## Corbyn

It was in February last year that the Labour Party, nursing some delusions about their chances of winning the next election against the increasingly fragile coalition, adopted a new system of electing its leader. Until then they had fumbled through a three-way performance in which a third of the votes would be cast by each of the Parliamentary Party, the trade unions and individual members. The new procedure was designed to be quicker and simpler and more democratic – one member one vote, to include registered supporters who would be allowed to vote on payment of a fee of £3. The Deputy Leader Harriet Harman was satisfied enough with this arrangement to describe it as 'a robust system to prevent fraudulent or malicious applications'. But the flaws in it were exposed when the *Daily Telegraph* suggested that the whole procedure could be disrupted by Conservative Party supporters – as well as anyone else with the same intentions – paying their £3 and going on to disrupt the election by voting for the most unsuitable and divisive candidate who would ensure that Labour lost the next general election. And in that role was Jeremy Corbyn of the relentlessly left-wing opinions and breaches of Parliamentary discipline. Piteously threatened, Andy Burnham warned that 'The Tory press are so desperate for Jeremy Corbyn to win that they're making up stories to give the impression that he already has'. Nominations in the leader election had to be supported by 35 MPs, which Corbyn reached by the narrowest of margins, with only minutes to spare on the closing day.

## Austerity

He promised to stand for drastic changes in Labour policy – like making amends for Blair and his lies by apologising for going to war in Iraq. There would be no more pandering to Tory discipline through austerity, such as in a recent report by the Department of

Work and Pensions that between December 2011 and February 2014 there were 2,380 people who died within fourteen days of being struck off Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) after a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) had ruled that they were fit for work. Andy Burnham described the WCA as 'punishing' and promised that a Labour government under him would ensure 'a humane approach to benefits' – in spite of the fact that the punitively inhumane machinery of the WCA was set up by the previous Labour government.



This same Andy Burnham also assured the voters that if he is ever Prime Minister he will reduce the National Debt '... towards its sustainable pre-global financial crisis levels' which avoids the crucial question of why and how the 'crisis' came upon us. Then Yvette Cooper, who supported the war on Iraq and the continuation of Trident, promised that she would ensure her government would '... reset Labour's relationships with business'. And Liz Kendall made it all sound so easy: 'We will bring debt down as a proportion of our GDP and will make surpluses in the good times' – assuming that capitalism's economy is always, easily, controllable.

## Democracy

As the leadership campaign began the Labour Party were pleased to represent it as an admirable exercise in democratic organisation. But this confidence collapsed when Corbyn came on the scene and took so convincing a lead. In response there was a move to concentrate the opposition to Corbyn by persuading two of the other candidates to stand down. Or to abandon the contest altogether until the party could re-write the rules so as to prevent the emergence of another candidate like Corbyn. These were not examples of democracy in action but of the subterfuge and denigration typical of relationships within a party of capitalism. No wonder that Corbyn should appeal to people like Janet and her husband Dave, with their mortgage and their jobs and two children coming up to their GCSEs with all the attendant stresses. As a couple they are something of a pollster's dream. Dave's grandparents came over here at the time of the *Empire Windrush* and now he manages a busy section of a local authority housing department. He sees the brutal reality of austerity every day, putting him under remorseless pressure. Janet has the same type of experiences in her work in one of the caring professions. These two are an example of what David Cameron – as did Ed Miliband – cynically calls Hard-working People. Neither of those twisters used phrases like Ruthlessly Exploited People. Repeatedly Deceived People. Contemptuously Disregarded People. So what was all that about Jeremy Corbyn? We have been here before, when the larger, more established parties were in such turmoil and confusion as to temporarily benefit some smaller, more outlandish group like the SDP and UKIP. It may be that Corbyn succeeds for a time in his stated objective to bring about some changes in society and its politics but our experience tells us that these will be no more significant or enduring than all those others, who are now part of capitalism's disreputable history. That is what's all about Jeremy Corbyn.

IVAN



In his 1998 book *The Common Good*, Noam Chomsky makes an important observation: 'The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum – even encourage the more critical and dissident views. That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate'.

The notion expressed here has been confirmed as the refugees crisis has unfolded. The government and the media have indeed set the parameters of the debate and the majority of people have engaged. Discussion has tended to focus on how many refugees Britain should take, what the relief effort would cost and whether, as the BBC had us considering, these unfortunates are refugees or migrants.

The public have responded empathically, often heroically, with a spontaneous upsurge of heartfelt solidarity, signing petitions, collecting money, taking part in demos and marches, even organising aid convoys to help stranded refugees in Calais. Governments across Europe have reacted accordingly to the outpouring of popular support and, in many cases risibly, with David Cameron, the British PM, for instance, pledging to take 20,000 refugees over the next five years – a mere 10 refugees a day and a figure dwarfed by the number of Britons who will leave their native

shores for a better life elsewhere in that period.

### The military 'solution'

There has been a ubiquitous outcry that something must be done to halt this global diaspora and Western governments – Britain's being no exception – have not been slow in interpreting this as a call for further military intervention in Syria where, currently, most refugees are fleeing from.

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (30 August), said: 'I perfectly accept that intervention has not often worked. It has been a disaster in Iraq; it has been a disaster in Libya. But can you honestly say that non-intervention in Syria has been a success? If we keep doing nothing about the nightmare in Syria, then frankly we must brace ourselves for an eternity of refugees, more people suffocating in airless cattle trucks at European motorway service stations, more people trying to climb the barbed wire that we are building around the European Union'.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (5 September) could 'not consider it enough to send aid to refugee camps in the Middle East.' Instead, he called for a military effort to 'crush' ISIS in its Syrian heartlands, voicing support for British military intervention to help establish "safe enclaves" within the country where civilians would be shielded from attack by the warring

factions in Syria's civil war.

Roger Cohen, an op-ed columnist, writing for the *New York Times* (10 September), expressed ideas that are becoming common in the US media: 'American interventionism can have terrible consequences, as the Iraq war has demonstrated. But American non-interventionism can be equally devastating, as Syria illustrates. Not doing something is no less of a decision than doing it'.

And for its part, the Murdoch-controlled media is also supportive of Western military intervention in Syria, perhaps not least because Murdoch is a major shareholder in Genie Energy which has recently been granted rights to explore for oil and gas in the portion of Syria occupied by Israel and known as the Golan Heights.

David Cameron has played his hand close to his chest, wary of forcing another Commons vote on military action in the region after his humiliating defeat two years ago unless, that is, he can be sure of winning the parliamentary consensus needed for airstrikes. With Jeremy Corbyn now facing him on the opposition benches as Labour leader, that support is extremely remote.

Needless to say, it's the same old lie, the same thin veil that has cloaked many a conflict peddled by politicians and their lackeys who count on people suffering massive bouts of historical amnesia at times of crisis – the perennial case for humanitarian intervention and bombs with smiley faces that supposedly kill only bad guys.

The BBC news site reported on 5 September that 'President Barack Obama has called on Congress to authorise US military action in Syria. The move has provoked sharp, multifaceted debate in the US Capitol as a resolution moves through the legislative process'.

And of that resolution, the *Guardian* reported (6 September): '... Barack Obama for the first time portrayed his plans for US military action [in Syria] as part of a broader strategy to topple [Syrian President] Bashar al-Assad, as the White House's campaign to win over sceptics in Congress gained momentum'.

Ostensibly, the resolution would allow a 90-day window for a US military attack in Syria, where both ISIS and the Syrian government would be targeted and with regime change in Syria the ultimate objective.



Syrian refugees at Budapest railway station, Sept 2015



Western political pundits would have it that their respective governments are not doing enough to solve the crisis in Syria and the resulting and ongoing chaos. This helps to mask just what they have done to create the crisis. In recent years, for instance, the Obama administration has engaged in crippling Syria with sanctions, provided air support for those keen to overthrow Assad and in direct violation of international law, inadvertently, and perhaps purposely, armed ISIS, and all but merged the CIA-bankrolled Free Syrian Army with Al Qaeda.

Supporting the anti-Assad forces, every bit as reactionary as the regime they are keen to overthrow, has cost the CIA over \$1 billion and US officials concede that they have trained 10,000 of these jihadist fighters. The maths speak for themselves – \$100,000 to train each fighter.

### Changing regimes

Syria and Iran have long been in Washington's crosshairs. Back in October of 2007, General Wesley Clark gave a speech to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco in which he revealed the gist of a memo from the Office of the US Secretary of Defense, weeks after 9/11, and US plans to 'attack and destroy the governments in seven countries in five years,' commencing with Iraq and moving on to 'Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and finally Iran'. Clark argued that this strategy is fundamentally about control of the region's vast oil and gas resources (see also: Real Men Want to go to Iran, *Socialist Standard*, March 2006).

Again in 2007, in a *New Yorker* article entitled 'The Redirection: Is the Administration's new policy benefiting our enemies in the war on terrorism?', Seymour Hersh wrote: 'To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East ... The US has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.'

In 2008, the US Army-funded RAND report, *Unfolding the Future of the Long War*, noted that 'the economies of the industrialised states will continue to rely heavily on oil, thus making it a strategically important resource.' Thus, with most



**Solidarity demo, London, August 2015**

oil being produced by the Middle East, Washington has 'motive for maintaining stability in and good relations with Middle Eastern states'.

The report goes on:

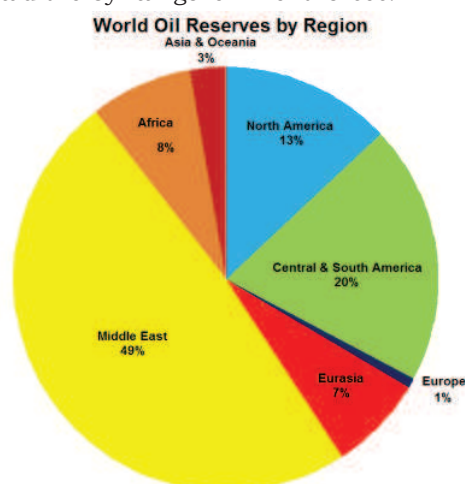
'The geographic area of proven oil reserves coincides with the power base of much of the Salafi-jihadist network. This creates a linkage between oil supplies and the long war that is not easily broken or simply characterised... For the foreseeable future, world oil production growth and total output will be dominated by Persian Gulf resources... The region will therefore remain a strategic priority, and this priority will interact strongly with that of prosecuting the long war'.

In August 2009 – and notably the year in which Britain covertly began to make plans to train anti-Assad rebels – it was announced that US-friendly Qatar was intent on running a pipeline through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and on to Turkey, and with a view to supply the European market and in blatant competition with Russia. Assad was having none of it and refused to sign any agreement – his allegiance was with Russia. Conversely, Assad had other plans that could only enrage Washington – proposals for an alternative \$10 billion pipeline plan with neighbouring Iran, crossing Iraq and into Syria that would also, it was hoped, allow Iran to supply gas to Europe direct. Assad was overstepping the mark, not playing by Washington's rules and his removal had become a necessity.

It is not just coincidence that those countries with major oil and gas deposits, or strategically placed so the same can be easily accessed, suffer the greatest instability and

are producing the greatest number of refugees. Cameron's 'moral responsibility' to refugees pales into insignificance when one considers the real agenda – Britain's part in Washington's plan for regime change in Syria. And this is where Cameron's personal 'responsibility' really lies – not with ordinary people, in their hundreds and thousands, compelled to flee war zones that his government had a hand in creating but with removing Assad, in order for instance to run a pipeline through Syrian territory and to prevent Iran and Russia gaining strategic momentum in the region.

Meanwhile, Russia – its overtures to seek peace talks with all factions in Syria rebuffed by Washington – has moved to strengthen the Assad government against ISIS and al-Qaeda backed rebels. In response, the White House issued a stern warning to Russia and pressured neighbouring governments, like Bulgaria, to deny Russia access to their air space in an attempt to block Russia's transportation of weapons to aid the Syrian government forces.





Critics warn that in moving to prevent Russian weapons reaching the Syrian government, Obama is strengthening those forces fighting to overthrow Assad and that if Obama wins a mandate for his new war and topples the Syrian president, these rebel groups are the ones who will fill the power vacuum. The logic suggests that overthrowing President Assad would in all probability create a radical jihadist state in Damascus, every bit as repressive as the current regime, and lead to massacres and floods of people fleeing reprisals – Syrian Christians, Alawites and Druze – ensuring the further destabilisation of the region. Thus, millions more refugees will sweep into neighbouring countries and Europe, that is if they survive the vengeance of the new Syrian rulers.

### The price paid

US intervention under the guise of humanitarian objectives is not about stabilising the world's trouble spots and alleviating human misery. The most cursory reading of US foreign policy since 1945 suggests the exact opposite. It destabilises one country after another on behalf of its corporate elite and its military-industrial complex and in furtherance of what has often been referred to as full spectrum

dominance, and to hell with the loss of life. Consider, for instance, Bill Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, when confronted in an interview with the heinous fact that 500,000 Iraqi children had died as a result of US sanctions. Her reply: 'It was a price worth paying'. For the US and its lackeys in Downing Street, the refugee crisis is perhaps a price worth paying, especially if the spin-off is consolidating their power in a region of the world rich in mineral resources and controlling who does and does not get access to them. The British government's real commitment can further be witnessed at the DSEI Arms Fair in London last month where some 1500 stall holders aimed to sell their wares to some of the most authoritarian, brutal and repressive regimes on Earth.

### Solidarity

In the meantime, the real clamour to help refugees is not coming from Western governments, but ordinary people from all walks of life, organising as best they can, in their groups, communities, and often as individuals. For socialists, it is reassuring that so many workers across Europe refuse to see those they are rallying to support as anything other than human beings,



Syrian refugees in Vienna, Sept 2015

homeless, frightened, displaced, and have refused to see them as migrants, illegal immigrants, refugees, Syrian, Libyan, Moslem, black or any of the other categories into which our species is labelled and pigeonholed. We can only hope this solidarity grows into a revolutionary class consciousness – when these same workers demand the eradication of borders and frontiers and every other artificial boundary that divides us, realising that same solidarity can help us fashion a world in our own interests if taken a step further.

**JOHN BISSETT**

## TTIP: putting profits before people

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a free trade and investment treaty being negotiated in secret between the European Union and the USA. The main goal of TTIP is to remove regulatory barriers which restrict the potential profits to be made by transnational corporations on both sides of the Atlantic.

The British government claims TTIP could add £10bn to the UK economy, \$80bn to the US and €100bn to the EU every year. It says consumers would benefit by the removal of EU import tariffs. And reducing regulation would help UK small businesses export to the US. Tariffs between the EU and US are already low, averaging around 3 percent but both sides foresee they will be eliminated under the agreement. The main focus of negotiations is on harmonising regulations, reducing 'non-tariff barriers' to trade, or abolishing them if they're deemed unnecessary. US and EU regulators have different requirements for testing the safety of products. Going through the different tests is expensive for business but TTIP

aims to reduce those costs by bringing in common standards.

TTIP is championed by the capitalist class. Cameron has described it as 'the biggest bilateral trade deal in history' (*Guardian* 17 June 2013). John Cridland of the CBI added 'with the UK already trading more and investing more with the US than any other country, there are real advantages to drive home particularly for smaller firms. TTIP would be the biggest free trade deal ever negotiated' (*CBI News* 18 December 2014).

Godfrey Bloom, the ex-UKIP MEP commented:

'For the conviction Free Trader, the international classical liberal TTIP is very natural progression in a global society especially between two great trading

blocks the USA and the EU.

It begs the expectation

of such supporters of 19th Century advocates such as Frederick Bastiat that 'when trade crosses borders armies do not'. A qualified welcome therefore from such idealists was fairly immediate, rightly so. One might carry forward Bastiat's theory to fit with more pressing international concerns such as migratory refugees: 'when trade crosses borders migrants don't'. Liberal societies with free trade agreements prosper.'

Bloom concluded 'the theory of TTIP is noble and worthwhile but in practice is doomed to failure. Does anybody imagine for a moment the regulators both sides of the Atlantic will not protect their turf, that they will voluntarily give ground, that big business in the world of crony



capitalism really want to see increased competition from small and medium sized businesses?' (*Huffington Post UK* 11 June).

### Trade and investment deals

The EU has been negotiating a similar trade and investment deal with Canada, known as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). One of Canada's key negotiating aims was to promote the use in Europe of oil from its tar sands. In 2012, the EU's Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) proposed that oil from tar sands should be given a 20 percent higher carbon value than conventional oil. This reflected the greater pollution caused by its production and was designed to steer companies away from using it in the EU. However, a few weeks after CETA was concluded, the final version of the FQD had been watered down, and lacked the earlier requirement that companies needed to account for the higher emissions from tar sands, effectively neutering it.

Another free trade agreement is the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) which would further consolidate transnational corporate power. TISA covers 52 countries including the EU, North America, some South American nations, Japan, Israel, Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan. It is set to affect up to 70 percent of the global services economy. It includes the removal of restriction on moving 'natural persons' from one country to another which will mean the capitalist class can use migrant workers to drive down wages and conditions. For some countries their only 'comparative advantage' is cheap labour. TISA would allow multinational corporations to exploit migrant workers with impunity.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is considered by the US as the companion agreement to TTIP. This agreement covers the US, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Japan. TPP is one of the primary goals of the trade agenda of the Obama administration in the US.

### Right to sue governments

TTIP also consolidates the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) which gives transnational corporations the right to challenge a country's laws. ISDS allows transnational corporations to receive compensation for the absence of a 'predictable regulatory environment.' Already under existing WTO free-trade rules this type of argument has been used to attack clean energy, mining, land use, health, and labour rights. More than \$14 billion in 16 claims are now under litigation in the US. Under TTIP, a transnational corporation could sue a government if their profits might be affected by food safety standards or law-imposed wage increases. ISDS creates

a parallel legal system, independent of national law, allowing transnational corporations to sue governments in secret corporate courts over laws or regulations that might prevent or reduce profit, what they term 'indirect appropriation.'

In 2012, the government of Ecuador decided to terminate its contract with US oil corporation Occidental, after Occidental sold 40 percent of its production rights to another company without abiding by its legal obligation to obtain government approval. Occidental turned to the ISDS provision in the US-Ecuador Bilateral Investment Treaty. This allows companies to sue governments through international courts for policies that threaten their profits. Occidental won and, as a result, Ecuador was forced to pay out \$1.77 billion to Occidental, the highest compensation awarded to an investor through ISDS to date.

The government of Slovakia moved to restrict the powers of private insurance

first for their impacts on trade and business. 'Mutual recognition' means that the EU would recognise US standards as 'legitimate' and would therefore allow US exports into the EU even when they don't meet EU standards. TTIP is not to stimulate trade through removing tariffs between the EU and USA, as these are already at minimal level. The main goal of TTIP is to remove regulatory 'barriers' which restrict potential profits to be made by transnational corporations. The EU has much stricter regulations on GM crops, pesticides, food safety, and the environment than the US. TTIP deal could open the EU market to cheaper products with poorer standards such as hormone-fed beef rinsed in acid, genetically modified oil from pesticide-soaked crops, and butter laced with antibiotics. In the EU, the precautionary principle is paramount to policy-making, meaning that a business must prove to government that a product poses no threat to human

**"Suing governments becomes more remunerative than actually providing a service"**

firms in the public health system which led to a number of health insurance companies successfully suing the Slovak government for their loss of profits. The Dutch firm Achmea attempted to use the same powers to block the Slovak government from setting up a public insurance scheme that would provide health cover to all the country's citizens. Achmea lost but because the scheme had not yet been adopted. If it is, no doubt they will try again.

The Vattenfall Corporation, a Swedish energy company is using an ISDS clause in an energy treaty to sue the German government for €4.7 billion following its decision to close its nuclear power stations in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011. This case has not yet been decided. Corporations don't win every time but merely suing is an attempt to stop governments acting. As TUC General Secretary, Frances O'Grady has pointed out, it represents the spread of 'compensation culture' to the international level. Addressing the European Commission Trade Policy Day in Brussels in June, she said that ISDS identifies 'the compensation culture that is building up in multinational companies, where suing democratically elected governments becomes more remunerative than actually providing a service' (*TUC*, 23 June).

### Screening regulatory measures

All new US or EU proposals for legislation or regulation would have to be screened

health or the environment. In the USA, a product is presumed safe, and for it to be banned government must prove that there is a threat to human health or the environment.

If global temperature rise is to be kept below 2 degrees and the most severe impacts of climate change mitigated, around 80 percent of known fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground. The EU is pursuing a trade deal that would undoubtedly lead to even more money being poured into fossil fuel extraction. One of the key aims of TTIP is to push the US to reduce or remove current restrictions on the export of crude oil and shale gas. This would facilitate the export of tar sand oil, mined in Canada and refined/transported via the US. A EU 2014 report by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate confirmed that high-carbon investment over the next 15 years will only serve to lock in the risks of dangerous climate change.

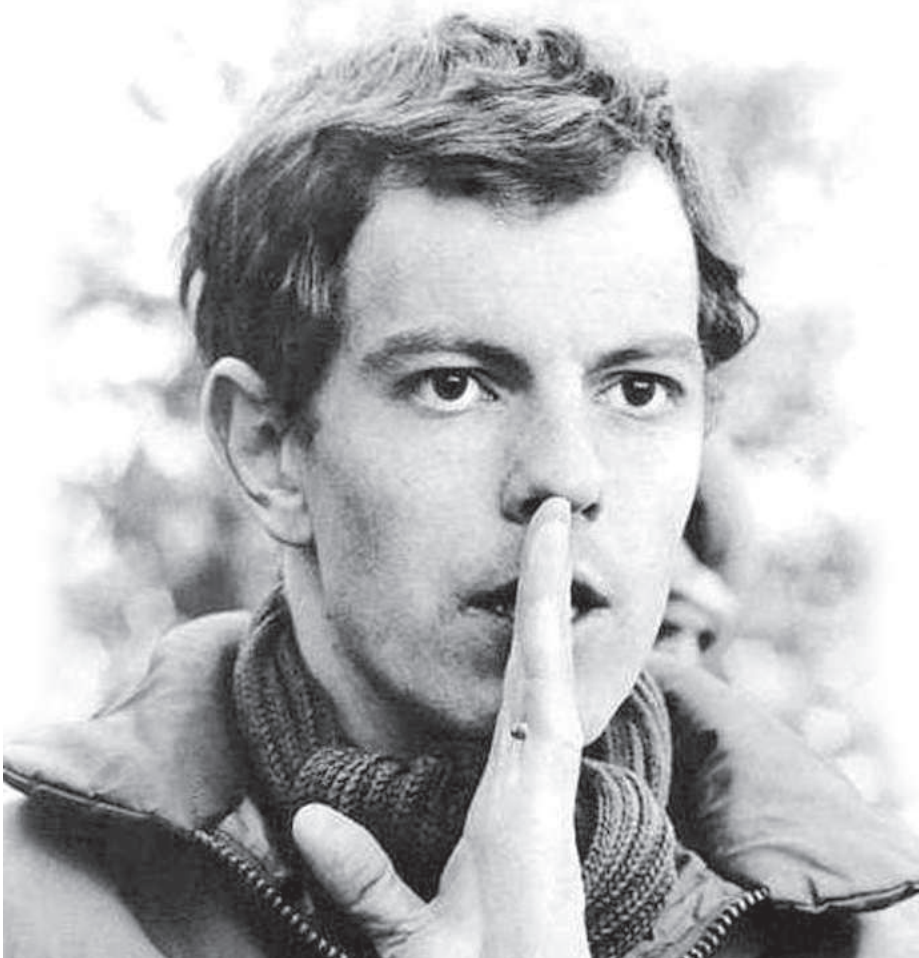
TTIP would allow private firms running NHS services to sue the government. The NHS is a 'public service' (the 1993 General Agreement on Trade in Services Treaty defines a 'public service' as one supplied 'neither on a commercial basis, nor in competition with one or more service suppliers') but as a result of the 2013 Health and Social Care Act, more health services in the UK are being put out to tender in a competitive market by Clinical Commissioning Groups. This commercial competitive element means that large parts of the NHS will not be

*Continued on page 18*



# Peter Watkins: a Revolutionary Film-Maker

To mark the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of film-maker Peter Watkins, we examine his unfairly neglected work.



**P**eter Watkins, the film auteur, has been subject to massive marginalisation of his work. His entire oeuvre has seemingly met with extreme disapproval by the state, the power structures in capitalism and its ideological support structure, the mass media. Watkins can be a difficult film artist but he is essential cinema, the pioneer of the faux docudrama where he dissects historical events, the present day, or the near future. He described himself as a libertarian socialist and campaigns against false, stale and authoritarian film-making.

In the mid-1970s, Watkins' experience of film-making and his studies of mainstream cinema and television led him to develop his theory of the 'Monoform', the predominant style used by the 'Mass Audio Visual Media' (MAVM) industry. A film or programme produced in the Monoform would be edited with a rapid succession of different images which don't allow the viewer long enough to digest and consider what they have seen. This style manipulates the viewer into interpreting the film according to

what the film-makers determine.

This theory influenced how Watkins would make his films. For example, *The Journey* (1987) did attempt in its use of time, space and alternative structures to counter the Monoform. His later preference for lengthy films gave the viewer more time and information to consider the subject matter, although he recognised that non-monoform movies don't have to be as long as *The Journey's* 14.5 hours! His use of non-professional actors and improvised scenes (even before he developed the theory of the Monoform) were intended to give a voice to people outside the media industry.

His theory of the Monoform includes a discourse about the 'Universal Clock' which refers to the synchronisation and the global movement of the televisions in the world, calibrated anywhere, at any time, their programming constructed without meaning, context or feeling but fitting within time constraints determined by commercials.

The Monoform treats audiences as receivers, consumers, passive spectators when faced with news,

television and film. People are trained to accept the mass media in a non-critical light as if the media is neutral and informative. The Monoform precludes any critical analysis of technique, structure, or effect, and is based on pre-formed moulds, from which there is no real freedom. The public are viewed as inherently stupid so that it needs authoritarian, simplistic, rapidly-moving language forms in order to absorb consumer ideas from TV.

To counter the Monoform, Watkins advocates an organic relationship between the film-maker and the audience; using non-professionals furthers his cause of involving the public in a democratic media. Watkins has laid out new possibilities for meaningful audience interaction with media, not just for viewers and those involved in production, but on a personal level. He endeavours to remove the comfortable avoidance of reality inherent in conventional programming on television by challenging the mainstream media's handle on the way we view the world through television and film. Watkins has wrought more truth from the faux docudrama genre than the documentaries of the so-called vérité school.

Watkins himself pioneered the docudrama genre of dramatising events in the style of newsreel footage, right from the early years of his career. In the mid 1950s, he was part of the Playcraft amateur theatre group in Kent. He acquired an 8mm camera and directed the group in short films set in the first and second world wars, and during the 1956 Hungarian uprising. By the early 1960s, Watkins was working as an assistant producer at the BBC. He had already noticed that 'much of the commercial cinema in the 1950s and early 1960s, and television in general, felt extremely stilted and conventional, holding the public locked into set and authoritarian agendas', and he wanted 'to offer a way of countering the effects of soap-opera historical reconstructions and TV news broadcasts' ([pwatkins.mnsi.net/part2\\_home.htm](http://pwatkins.mnsi.net/part2_home.htm)). So, when he had the opportunity to produce his own film for the BBC, he built on his newsreel style, and *Culloden* (1964) was the result.

The film showed the 1746 battle between forces loyal to the Stuart and Hanover royal dynasties, and its aftermath, as if a TV camera crew had been there to record it. In less than an hour, over 2,000 soldiers



were killed, and the victorious Hanoverian Duke of Cumberland's troops then went on to hunt down any remaining members of opposing clans. One of Watkins' aims was to draw parallels between the resulting destruction of the clan system and the American army's impact on civilians during the then-current Vietnam War.

Many of the cast were non-professional actors, including descendents of those who fought at Culloden. This wasn't just an artistic decision in order to elicit more naturalistic performances, but also a political statement. Watkins wanted his films to provide a voice for anyone, rather than the biased, unrepresentative media industry. The film received enthusiastically supportive reviews, especially for its pioneering techniques.

1965, stating 'the effect of the film has been judged by the BBC to be too horrifying for the medium of broadcasting, it will, however, be shown to invited audiences.' A Parliamentary question in December 1965 'asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he made to the BBC concerning the Civil Defence film called *The War Game*; and why he exerted pressure to prevent its showing to the public'. But the Labour government denied any outside pressure on the BBC. There had also been pressure from Equity, the British actors' union, who were angry that non-professional actors had been used.

*The War Game* was released to cinema in 1966, and picked up the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, and a BAFTA.

taken, but refused. Television could have been a plurality of forms and processes.' Watkins' disillusionment with the way television programming was heading meant that he left the BBC and turned instead to film production.

His reputation as a talented new voice meant he could attract the backing of major studios such as Universal Pictures. This led to *Privilege* (1967), a docudrama about Steven Shorter, a manufactured pop idol of the near future. Shorter's career is dictated by his management company, which is working with the government to distract his millions of fans from society's problems. His stage act uses violence to provide 'the public with a necessary release of all the nervous tension caused by the state of the world'. Shorter's popularity with the masses means



Scenes from *Culloden* and *The War Game*

After *Culloden*, the BBC commissioned Watkins again, and he produced the 1965 harrowing, bleak, nuclear war docudrama *The War Game*, 47 minutes in length. It concerned a nuclear attack on Britain focusing on the North Kent area, and featured instant flash blindness, a firestorm, radiation sickness, widespread psychological damage and suicide. We see the Army burn corpses, the rationing of resources, police shooting looters during food riots, civil disturbance becomes a capital offence, and people are executed by firing squad. The cast was almost entirely made up of non-actors, and Watkins filmed in the style of a news magazine programme.

The BBC violated their own Charter when in September 1965 they screened the film to senior members of the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Post Office, the Military Chiefs of Staff, and the Secretary to Harold Wilson's Cabinet. As a result, the BBC suppressed transmission before the screening date in October

Hypocritically, the BBC picked up the awards although the BBC had also said the film was banned because it was an artistic failure! Today both *The War Game* and *Culloden* have been available for some years on DVD but it is difficult to obtain these films for theatrical screenings which is related to restrictions imposed by Equity. The BBC eventually broadcast *The War Game* twenty years later in July 1985 during the week before the fortieth anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

The film essentially stated that civil defence policies did not prepare the public for a nuclear attack. Watkins said later that 'I was interested in breaking the illusion of media-produced 'reality''. My question was 'Where is 'reality?'' Watkins disassembled the fourth wall to uproot the MAVM complacency, and characters deliver direct Brechtian statements to camera. Patrick Murphy, a senior lecturer in Film and Television at York St John University, quotes Watkins: '*The War Game* and *Culloden* are signposts to a direction that TV could have

that he can be used to manipulate them. So when the state wants to promote religious and national unity, Shorter is rebranded as repentant and faithful. The singer Paul Jones from Manfred Mann plays Shorter, giving a tense, awkward performance which reflects how the character is trapped and unable to express himself.

*Privilege* was dismissed by contemporary reviewers as 'paranoid, hysterical and unconvincing' (*Privilege* DVD booklet), and was shown by few cinemas. Consequently, it has been largely forgotten, whereas it should be recognised as a lively and perceptive critique of the mass media's power, echoing Herbert Marcuse's views about consumerism as a form of social control. The directions that Watkins' career would take next reflect his growing awareness of how the media industry stifles intelligent debate. The concluding part of our look at his work will follow in the next issue.

(concluded next month)

**MIKE FOSTER & STEVE CLAYTON**

# Truths, half-truths and lies

*Truth is a troublesome concept, and not just for the 'bad guys'*

For hundreds of years philosophers have sought to define its meaning and understand its efficacy in relation to our world. It has undergone many incarnations including: correspondence truth, coherence truth, pragmatic truth, linguistic truth and its final nemesis, the redundancy theory. It is said that in the dead of night the post-modernists can be seen to dance on truth's grave. But it has proved to be a most resilient idea that is still valued by most of us even if we fail to articulate just what it is. We can readily identify its antithesis – a lie or false-hood. In contemporary

politics 'propaganda' is a word many use for false claims or downright lies.

We in the Socialist Party have had a relaxed relationship with the word 'propaganda', using it in its original sense as involving the propagation of ideas. But reading these words and the other articles in this journal an objective reader might very well suspect a 'bias' in our analysis of politics, history and economics. We don't deny the existence of a clear perspective – every word is aimed at serving the political cause of the great majority (the working class). This being the case, how can the *Socialist Standard*

hope for journalistic 'balance', or be considered as anything other than 'propaganda' both in terms of its perspective and in the possibility that we might manipulate information to suit our political aims? In other words can the reader have any confidence in the truth of what we write?

## **Different perspectives**

Consider the phrase: 'High profits and property prices are good for the economy'. This represents mainstream journalistic bias since it disallows the possibility of any disaffection from accepted political norms within a capitalist context.

*Truth: a troublesome concept*





---

**“In the end perhaps we can only glimpse parts of the truth, but to ignore the concept entirely is to flirt with the disaster of Orwellian ‘business speak’”**

---

What is ‘good for the economy’ is identified with what is good for the owners of the mainstream media and their chums – the parasitic minority. To the majority the statement means a higher rate of exploitation at work and yet another barrier to finding a place to live. Can both perspectives be simultaneously true?

Different perspectives of the same phenomena can result in opposite interpretations and conclusions. Can ‘what is good for the economy’ be bad for those who make it work? Is the truth or otherwise of all political statements dependent on this type of class perspective? Then consider this statement: ‘Capitalism can only work in the interests of the capitalists and against the economic interests of the majority’. This claim would seem to be above and outside the political context that defines class perspective. It claims a more objective and historical account of an economic relationship. But is it true?

You will never read such a statement within the mainstream media for reasons that are self evident. They cannot claim that: ‘Yes it is true that the system makes the rich richer and the rest are unimportant’ even if they know this to be the case. Perhaps this is one of many important distinctions between our ‘propaganda’ and that of those who defend the capitalist system; everything we write we believe to be true but, given that not all of our opponents are just plain stupid, it is very hard to believe that they can have any faith in the integrity of what they write. One always suspects that they smile privately about their own cynicism in protecting their interests at every opportunity; from the persecution of the poor to the ridiculous claim that the rich exist because ‘they work hard’ or are ‘geniuses at innovation’.

### **Compromising**

Another criticism that socialists

encounter is that truth is said to be never ‘black and white’ and that our uncompromising political stance is impractical and sectarian. To compromise does have a reassuring mature patina to it but if we are correct that capitalism in all its forms is diametrically opposed to the majority’s economic interests what is it exactly that we’re supposed to compromise on? The Left regard it as a victory if they are allowed to collect a few more crumbs from the rich man’s table (minimum wage etc). But if a person steals your wallet and returns it minus two thirds of its content then it is still reasonable to regard them as thieves.

For over a hundred years the Left has made one compromise after another and what has it to show for all their boot-licking reforms – people in higher debt, later retirement, low wages, family breakdown, trade union enfeeblement etc, etc. Just as Oliver Cromwell allowing compromise after compromise with Charles I in his feeble bourgeois attempt to keep his king on the throne led to just more bloodshed so we have reached an historical situation where compromise is seen as weakness and is politically pointless. The story of the frog and the scorpion comes to mind: the scorpion asked a frog to give him a ride on his back so that he could cross the river. The frog said ‘but you’ll sting me and we’ll both die’. The scorpion made a solemn promise he would not do so and the frog took him. Halfway across the scorpion stung him. As they both sank to their deaths the frog asked: ‘why did you do that?’ The scorpion replied: ‘It’s in my nature’. So it is with capitalism; any attempt at compromise and reform will just prolong the world’s agony. In this respect the truth is ‘black and white’ and no pleading with the beast will make it any greyer.

The witness’ oath: ‘I promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth’ may be a

very high and even unobtainable ideal in political terms but any compromise in aspiring to it must lead to a loss of moral integrity. All we can promise you is that everything we write is done in good faith with the single aim of revealing the truth about the politics of capitalism and the meaning of socialism. We have no other agenda. If ‘truth’ is regarded as anachronistic by some intellectuals then so be it – we believe that the complexity of a concept does not necessarily render it useless. We live in a world of political spin, half-truths, marketing and lies.

Socialism is not just another political commodity that we are trying to sell. Superficially it may appear to the politically naïve as just another leftist variation swamped by so many other groups misusing the term ‘socialist’. In the end perhaps we can only glimpse parts of the truth, but to ignore the concept entirely is to flirt with the disaster of Orwellian ‘business speak’ where: ‘War is peace, freedom is slavery and ignorance is strength’.

**WEZ**



protected from TTIP.

## Unemployment

The EU has admitted that TTIP will probably cause unemployment as jobs switch to the US, where labour standards and trade union rights are lower. Examples from other similar bi-lateral trade agreements around the world support the case for job losses. The Economic Policy Institute in Washington DC estimates that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the US, Canada and Mexico caused the loss of a million US jobs and shrinking real-terms wages for millions more workers. The Centre for Economic Policy Research concluded in a study commissioned by the European Commission itself that TTIP could cause between 680,000 and 1.3 million job losses in Europe and between 325,000 and 715,000 jobs in the US.

The US also has lower labour standards and employment rights than EU countries. The US has not ratified a number of the most important International Labour Organisation Conventions, including the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The US has also passed Right to Work legislation in 24 states, most recently in the traditional union stronghold of Michigan, which clamp down on unions capacity to bargain and organise. European companies may take advantage of the ease of market access created by TTIP to relocate to the USA, and take advantage of the weak labour regulations. There is also the possibility that American companies may be encouraged by TTIP to relocate to EU states such as Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia where incomes are low and trade unions are weaker than in other parts of the EU.

For transnational corporations, barriers to trade are things that restrict their profits such as labour rights, food safety rules, regulations on the use of toxic chemicals, the minimum wage, health and safety laws, and environmental regulations. TTIP is a charter for profit before people. The casualties will be working class people the world over, who will end up as collateral damage, more powerless and more vulnerable than ever in the face of global capitalism. TTIP is a race to the bottom, to the lowest common denominator that will further the interests of global capitalism.

Marx in his *Speech on the Question of Free Trade* in Brussels in January 1848 pointed out that 'when you have torn down the few national barriers which still restrict the free development of capital, you will merely have given it complete freedom of action... every one of the destructive phenomena to which unlimited competition gives rise within any one nation is reproduced in more gigantic proportions in the market of the world.' He concluded 'the Free Trade system works destructively. It breaks up old nationalities and carries antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point. In a word, the Free Trade system hastens the Social Revolution. In this revolutionary sense alone, gentlemen, I am in favour of Free Trade.'

**STEVE CLAYTON**

## socialist party dvd



**Capitalism & Other Kids' Stuff**

Takes a fresh look at the world, and challenges basic assumptions about capitalism.

**Capitalism and Other Kids' Stuff**

Takes a fresh look at the world, and challenges basic assumptions about capitalism.



**Poles Apart? - Capitalism or Socialism as the planet heats up.**

Capitalism or Socialism as the planet heats up.

**Poles Apart?**

Capitalism or Socialism as the planet heats up.

**For a copy, complete the order form on page 7**



## People's QE

IN HIS successful bid to get elected Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn advocated a 'people's' instead of a 'bankers' quantitative easing. This, apparently, as the way to end austerity. It is true that what has been called 'quantitative easing' has been aimed at benefiting capitalist firms, by lowering the rate of interest at which they can borrow.

In Britain its official name is the 'Asset Purchase Facility'. Under it the Bank of England buys government bonds off banks, paying for them by increasing the reserves which the banks are required to hold with it. This has two effects. It helps liquidity within the banking system and allows banks to convert some of these reserves into circulating money. And it raises the price of government bonds, so lowering their 'yield', ie. the ratio of the amount of interest (which is fixed) to their price. This is supposed to affect interest rates generally, so making it cheaper for capitalist firms to borrow to invest.

The term 'quantitative easing' is one academic economists coined to describe this policy. Over the years governments and their economic advisers have had recourse to various theories and practices to try to manage the way the capitalist economy works. When one fails, another is thought up. The current dominant theory is that the way to control capitalism is by manipulating interest rates. The idea is that in a boom the government should try to increase them to slow it down or even choke it off; in a slump it should aim to reduce them. However, when they are so low – close to zero or negative – as they are now, the way to do this, so the theory goes, is through pushing up bond prices by the government buying them and 'easing' its monetary policy and increasing the 'quantity' of money to pay for this.

Increasing the quantity of money by the government creating more electronically to buy bonds is the only thing that so-called 'people's QE' has in common with conventional 'bankers' QE'. The big difference is that the bonds to be purchased will not be government bonds but bonds issued by a new State



Investment Bank to raise money to invest in infrastructure and green projects. The aim would not be to influence interest rates and liquidity in the banking system but to finance economic activity.

But why doesn't the government simply 'print' more money directly and hand it out to government departments to invest or spend? Good question. The answer is that this is not the way it needs to be done in modern capitalist countries with a sophisticated financial system. That's only done in places like Venezuela and Zimbabwe. It would also be against EU rules, and 'people's QE' is being offered as a way round them.

It's not likely to be tried. It might be Corbyn's preferred choice but is unlikely to be adopted by the Labour Party even with him as Leader. Labour has learned the hard way that, in an economy driven by business investment, the government has to be business-friendly or provoke an economic downturn. But suppose that the next Labour government did adopt it, what would happen?

While conventional QE has only caused a rise in the price of financial assets, people's QE may well cause a rise in the general price level. Which in turn would make exports less competitive, and it would soon be back to the balance of payments crises of the 60s and the double-digit inflation of the 70s. And eventually a return to austerity.

The cruel truth is that no government can make capitalism work for the 'people'.



# Dennis Hopper

FOUR HUNDRED black and white photographs taken between 1961 and 1967 by film director and actor Dennis Hopper (1936-2010) went on show last year at the Royal Academy of Arts, London. These photographs haven't seen the light of day since his first ever photography show in Fort Worth, Texas in 1970. Hopper used a 28 mm lens Nikon camera, and later said 'I didn't crop my photos. They are full frame natural light.'



He turned to photography in the 1960s 'because the reality of the things going on around me was more interesting than the fantasies of the world I worked in.'

Hopper's photographs capture the Counter Culture and other historical, social and political events during the sixties. He carried his camera with him everywhere around his neck during this period.

The Sixties Counter Culture was inspired by Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, Wilhelm Reich, Norman O Brown's *Life Against Death*, Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, and Alan Watts' *The Joyous Cosmology*. Foucault described the era as a 'surge of libido modulated by the class struggle.' Hopper reminisced that 'it was an incredible moment. There was practically a revolution going on to stop the Vietnam war', and that 'I've always been political... I was with Martin Luther King and at the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley. I was a hippie. I was probably as Left as you could get without being a Communist.'

Hopper is critically acclaimed for his direction of such films as *Easy Rider*, *The Last Movie*, and *Out of the Blue*, and outstanding acting in films like *Tracks*, *The American Friend*, and *Blue Velvet*.

He was trained in Stanislavski Method acting at the Lee Strasberg Actors School. Hopper got his directing start as second unit director on the LSD film *The Trip*.

His 1964 photograph *The Trip* is a psychedelic all-seeing eye of God with a homunculus in a Stetson. Hopper photographed the Human Be-In in San Francisco in January 1967 and photographs from this include *Timothy Leary*, *Love-In*, *Hippies*, *Flower Children*, and *Hippie Girl Dancing*. He formed a close friendship with beat poet Michael McClure at this time. Hopper would later say 'We're a new kind of human being. We're taking on more freedom and more risk. In a spiritual way, we may be the most creative generation in the last nineteen centuries.'

He photographed the Hells Angels, outlaw motorcyclists who became notorious with the film *The Wild Angels*, and publications of Hunter S Thompson's *Hells Angels*, and *Freewheelin' Frank* by Frank Reynolds and Michael McClure. The exhibition includes *Hells*



**Mexican Cowboys, 1965**

*Angels San Pedro, Hells Angel Girl*, and *Bruce Dern as Hells Angel* from the 1966 film *The Wild Angels*.

The defining moment of the Civil Rights movement: the 54 mile march of 4,000 people from Selma to Montgomery in Alabama led by Martin Luther King in 1965 was captured by Hopper. He later recalled that 'Marlon Brando got me involved in the march.'

He photographed the street life of Harlem and Los Angeles. His 1961 *Double Standard* is a quintessentially LA image complete with convertible top and traffic. *Seamstress*, *All Night Diner*, *Downtown LA*, *Working Man*, *Homeless guy & belongings in pram* demonstrates Hopper's humane view of those on the margins of society subject to poverty and hard work. Hopper said 'I saw myself as a political artist at the time, or rather as one aiming to express social protest.'

Hopper's photography is influenced by Aaron Siskind, Robert Capa, and Cartier-Bresson. He is in the American tradition of photographers like Dorothea Lange and Gordon Parks who were employed by the 'New Deal' Farm Security Administration in the 1930s and '40s. This was a rural rehabilitation programme to improve the lives of share-croppers, tenants, poor farmers, and included a programme to purchase submarginal land and resettle farmers in group farms which was an experiment in collectivising agriculture. Hopper's photographs can be compared to Robert Frank's record of life on the road in *The Americans* (1958).

In the 1980s Hopper became a Republican; 'I read Thomas Jefferson, the idea of having less government, more individual freedom, is something that I liked' but in 2008 he supported Barack Obama saying his reason for not voting Republican was the selection of Sarah Palin as the Vice Presidential candidate.

Hopper's politics are essentially philosophical individualist anarchism drawing on Thomas Jefferson's belief that people

needed to be vigilant against any laws that 'violates the rights of the individual' and 'that government is best which governs least.' He is also in the tradition of Emerson's 'Every actual state is corrupt. Good men must not obey the laws too well ... Wild liberty develops iron conscience. Want of liberty, by strengthening law and decorum, stupefies conscience', and Thoreau's 'action from principle', and 'government is best which governs not at all' in *Civil Disobedience*. Both Gandhi, and Martin Luther King cite the huge influence of Thoreau's essay.

Ed Ruscha concluded 'Like me, Dennis's art grows out of alienation. Dennis always responded to city anxiety, graffiti, etchings on walls, expressing the frustrations of urban life.'

**STEVE CLAYTON**



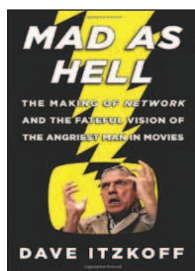
**Hippie Girl Dancing, 1967**



**Hyde Park speaker, 1961-7**

# The book on the film

***Mad as Hell: The Making of Network and the Fateful Vision of the Angriest Man in Movies* by Dave Itzkoff (Times Books, 2014)**



In 1976, MGM released Paddy Chayefsky's *Network*, a film that would change the way people saw television. It tells the story of Howard Beale, the distinguished

senior anchorman of a major American network, who suffers an on-air breakdown. 'I'm going to blow my brains out right on this program a week from today,' he announces, explaining that he 'just ran out of bullshit' to broadcast. The network executives are horrified and plan on firing him, but after seeing the effect his rants had on the show's ratings, decide to keep him on. An increasingly inflamed Beale abandons all pretence of objectivity and uses his top-rated show to whip millions into a frenzy over the injustices he sees in society. Impressed, the network commissions a slate of new programmes showcasing violent crime, terrorism, political extremism, and paranoid prophecies of doom—all with the sole purpose of channelling viewers' fear and outrage into market share and advertising revenue.

*Network* caused a sensation when it was released. It was loudly denounced by television journalists, who saw it as an unconscionable attack on the nobility of their profession, but it went on to sweep the Academy Awards with a record-setting ten nominations and four wins. Despite this, the film is virtually unknown to today's audiences—and when it is shown at all, viewers take it as a straight-up drama rather than the sly but radical comedy it was written and received as in the 1970s. As contemporary screenwriter Aaron Sorkin aptly put it, 'No predictor of the future—not even Orwell—has ever been as right as Chayefsky was when he wrote *Network*.'

In *Mad as Hell*, Dave Itzkoff of *The New York Times* recounts the curious story of how a film as anti-establishment as *Network* ever made it to the big screen. In Itzkoff's analysis, that *Network* got produced at all may well have been a happy historical accident: MGM had found themselves missing out on the counterculture wave that

was sweeping Hollywood, and so, desperate for a box office hit of their own, acceded to veteran screenwriter Paddy Chayefsky's demands for total creative control over his next film. Chayefsky used this highly unusual grant of authority—which exceeded even that of the film's director—to ensure that his dystopian world was faithfully translated from screenplay to film. That *Network* so pointedly attacked the medium of television was of no concern to the studio, which at the time had no relationship to any television networks apart from the occasional sale of broadcasting rights for their films. Whether MGM would have produced such a film today is another matter entirely. 'In an age when all the major broadcast networks are now either owned by or affiliated with a motion picture and entertainment conglomerate,' observes Itzkoff, 'it is hard to imagine a studio turning its guns on itself the same way.'

*Mad as Hell* faithfully documents *Network*'s entire production process, from early drafts of the screenplay up to postproduction and pre-release marketing, and goes on to recount and analyze the controversy and critical acclaim the film garnered upon its release. Of greatest interest, however, is the book's final chapter, which discusses how Chayefsky's nightmarish vision of a world that has eroded away the distinction between information and entertainment has finally come to pass. Itzkoff attributes this to a significant relaxation in antitrust laws and federally mandated broadcasting standards, coupled with a proliferation of cable TV channels. While journalism has never been truly objective, before 1987 US broadcasters were at least nominally required to be honest and to provide contrasting views. Itzkoff explains how 'informational' television today is dominated by shallow, tabloid-style programming, making good use of interviews with veteran newsmen who have variously resisted and embraced the new regime. Itzkoff is equally astute at identifying the film's enduring contribution to popular political discourse. Though neither Paddy Chayefsky nor his mouthpiece Howard Beale are socialists, they are both acutely aware of the ills of global capitalism and of the urgent necessity of the population at large taking some sort of radical, corrective action. ('We are right now living in what has to be called a corporate society, a corporate world, a corporate universe,' laments Beale at one point in the film. 'This world quite

simply is a vast cosmology of small corporations orbiting around larger corporations who, in turn, revolve around giant corporations, and this whole, endless, ultimate cosmology is expressly designed for the production and consumption of useless things.') *Network*, Itzkoff concludes, was all about 'awakening its viewers to ugly and unflattering truths about their lives and the world they inhabited, and it did not communicate its messages in a subtle or soft-spoken manner: it put its most urgent and passionate ideas in the mouth of a man who at times is literally screaming them at his audience, commanding them to go to their windows and scream their dissatisfaction themselves.' Indeed, what sets Beale apart from his countless successors—both in the film and in real life—are his perceptiveness and sincerity. He proclaims himself to be 'mad as hell', but he is not deranged; he is lucid and insightful, and his anger is no mere shtick. The real tragedy of Beale—and of Chayefsky—may be that they failed to offer their enraptured viewers any real solution to the problems they so effectively articulated.

**TRISTAN MILLER**

## Recent Times

***Charlie Chaplin. Peter Ackroyd. Vintage £7.99.***



Charlie Chaplin was born in a South London slum in 1889. His childhood was extremely impoverished, including spells in a workhouse, and his first show-business job was as a clog

dancer at the age of nine. He became an actor and stage performer, joined Fred Karno's company and travelled to the US, where he made his first film in 1914. He survived the birth of talkies and became a director and independent film-maker. Already by 1915, according to Ackroyd, he was the most famous man in the world.

Chaplin was best known for his screen persona as the Tramp, the 'little fellow' who became a kind of universal symbol of failure and hopelessness. Some of his films were overtly political, such as *The Great Dictator* (1940), where he played Adenoid Hynkel. This applied in particular to *Modern Times* (1936), about factory life and the repetitive and dehumanising nature of the



production line.

In the First World War, he decided to stay in the US rather than return to the UK and risk being conscripted; people sent him envelopes with white feathers in, and some British cinemas stopped showing his films. During the Second World War, he made remarks supporting the 'Soviet Union' as a wartime ally, and also expressed some admiration for Stalin. Together with the implied message of *Modern Times*, this led in the late 1940s to trouble with the House Un-American Activities Committee. Some thought it suspicious that he had lived in the US for thirty years without becoming a US citizen, and in 1952, as he and his family sailed to Britain, his permit to re-enter the US was withdrawn (though he was later allowed to visit). For some discussion of his political views, see [www.cartoonresearch.com/gerstein/chaplin/commie.html](http://www.cartoonresearch.com/gerstein/chaplin/commie.html).

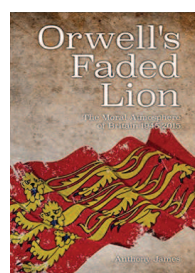
Ackroyd describes Chaplin as 'a libertarian with tendencies towards anarchism'. But this is hardly compatible with his authoritarian approach to directing, his support for President Roosevelt, and his chauvinistic attitude to women. He also accepted a knighthood and was very concerned to protect his US-

based property and investments. Though he was hardly consistent, he is perhaps best seen as someone who, looking back at his impoverished childhood, identified with the poor and downtrodden, but had no ideas about restructuring or even reforming society. Claims about him being a 'Communist' say more about the hysteria prevalent in some circles in the US than about Chaplin himself.

**PB**

## Lion That Failed to Roar?

**Orwell's Faded Lion. Anthony James. Imprint Academic. £14.95. 2015.**



examines the evolution of British

The focus for this book is the 'Moral Atmosphere of Britain 1945-2015' as the subtitle would have it, and it is an entertaining and potentially thought-provoking read. The book

society since Orwell wrote about Britain as the Second World War was coming to an end. James has travelled widely and he is able to draw on many of his experiences to give a comparative slant to his observations. He especially focuses on Britain's insularity and failure to live up to the revolutionary hopes he says Orwell had for it.

He writes from a generally radical and leftist perspective without any transparent alignment with any particular political party. As often seems to be the case with books like this, much is traced back to the Thatcher era and its shortcomings, though perhaps without a full recognition of the wider economic forces within capitalism that brought this sort of phenomenon about (including, over time, in other countries).

While well-written in many respects, the book suffers structurally. This is mainly because it is part political tract, partly a collection of literary critiques and part personal memoir. It is the latter that appears to be its greatest strength – while the politics is quite strong on the analysis there seems little by way of clear solution proffered, while the literary sections



## High-Tech Hide and Seek

SHOULD YOU ever hurriedly need to abandon your home and go on the run from the state, how long would you last? You'd soon be recorded on CCTV, and any phone call, bank transaction, e-mail or social

media post could be monitored, making

it harder than ever before to remain undetected. This is the premise behind *Hunted*, Channel 4's new gameshow, or 'real-life thriller' as they describe it. Its participants are all concerned about the surveillance state, and turn this mistrust into a challenge to evade capture for 28 days from professional investigators using real-life state powers.

Based in their high-tech lair, the hunters are a cold, steely bunch of ex-cops and military, led by Brett Lovegrove, former head of London's police counter-terrorism unit. Armed with the latest software for snooping and hardware for hunting, the investigators track the fugitives and pass on any leads to their ground troops.

Starting off with each fugitive's name, photo, date of birth and address, the investigators quickly trace any vehicles owned, bank accounts, job details and social media profiles. 'You're more truthful to your search engine than you are to your wife' quips one of the investigators, just a few clicks away from accessing pretty much all someone's online life. They even break into the participants' houses to snatch

dirty washing for sniffer dogs to find a scent.

When the game begins, fugitive Ricky zooms away on his motorbike, whose registration number is promptly discovered by the investigators. The bike is spotted on roadside cameras linked to Automatic Number Plate Recognition software, and his journey is tracked. He only escapes capture within hours of starting by turning onto smaller, camera-less roads. Prying into Ricky's e-mails and profiling his behaviour patterns leads the investigators to correctly predict he'll head to Scotland.

Sandra and Elizabeth give away their location when they use an ATM, allowing the investigators to hone in on nearby CCTV. A camera shows them getting on a coach, and the investigators catch them after they get off.

Emily and Lauren hitch-hike to avoid their movements being traced, but Emily's home phone is being monitored, and her calls back there pinpoint where she is.

*Hunted*'s producers have aimed for authenticity, ensuring 'all of the information being requested and gathered by the hunters reflected the powers that would be available to them in real life, and within the appropriate time frame.' Disappointingly, we only see edited highlights of the investigators' investigations and each fugitive's flight, giving brief snapshots of their plans, thoughts, and feelings, rather than exploring the scenario in much depth. Despite this lack of detail, *Hunted* is a sobering reminder of how much grip the state has on our lives. It's worth tracking down.

**MIKE FOSTER**



## Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

### Manchester Branch

Sunday 4 October, from 12 noon  
Literature distribution at Anti-Austerity March at Conservative Party Conference.  
Meet at northern edge of All Saints Park by the junction with Oxford Road (outside MMU's All Saints Building), Manchester.

### Manchester Branch

Saturday 10 October 2015, 2.00pm  
'Borders and Control: Migration under capitalism'  
The Unicorn Pub, 26 Church Street, Manchester M4 1PW

### Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

Saturday 17 October 2015, from 12 noon  
Canterbury Literature Stall  
The Parade pedestrian precinct, Canterbury CT1 2JL

### East Anglia Regional Branch

Saturday 17 October 2015, 2.00pm  
'Fracking - the Metabolic Rift with Nature'  
Speaker: Steve Clayton  
The Reindeer Pub, 10 Dereham Road, Norwich NR2 4AY

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 18 October 2015, 6.00pm\*  
Film 'Culloden'  
Introduced by Rob Worden  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 29 October 2015, 7.00pm  
'All Coppers are Workers: The Police, the State and the Working Class'  
Speaker: Steve Clayton  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### East Anglia Regional Branch

Saturday 14 November 2015, 12 noon-4.00pm  
The Quebec Tavern, 93-97 Quebec Road, Norwich NR1 4HY

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 15 November 2015, 3.00pm  
'Anthropology and the Human Subject'  
Guest Speaker: Brian Morris  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 29 November 2015, 3.00pm  
'Charity: Capitalism's Little Helper'  
Speaker: Glenn Morris  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### OTHER EVENTS

### Annual Delegate Meeting

Saturday 24 October 2015 from 10.30am  
Sunday 25 October from 2.30pm  
Socialist Party Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Workshop on Key Messages and a Communication Strategy

Sunday 25 October 2015, 10.30am- 1.00pm  
Socialist Party Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Picture Credits

**p6:** Bicycle wheel, 2012, Ralf R, CC BY-SA 3.0  
**p8:** Diego Garcia, 2006, Blaine Steinert, PD  
**p10 -12:** Refugees in Hungary, 2015, SZERVÁC Attila, CCA-SA 4.0; Refugees welcome, 2015, David Holt, CCA-SA 2.0; Budapest station, 2015, Zoë Nicole Taylor, CCA-SA 4.0; pie chart, 2008, RockyMtnGuy, CCA-SA 3.0; oil drum, 2015, oelheld GmbH, CCA-SA 3.0  
**p18:** coinage, 2007, allen watkin, CCA-SA 2.0  
**p19:** Dennis Hopper, 2008, antje verena, CCA-SA 2.0  
**p20:** *Mad as Hell* – Amazon.com. *Charlie Chaplin* – Amazon.com. *Orwell's Faded Lion* – Amazon.com.  
**p21:** Spy camera - © Quevaal. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported licence.  
**p24:** Ban cluster bombs, 2008, pxkls, CC BY-SA 2.0; desert island, 2013, Timo Newton-

read rather like a series of mini-book reviews of the works of the major authors of post-war British fiction melded together, not altogether successfully. The style is journalistic and the narrative thread that links these various elements is not perhaps as strong as it might be.

The best section relates to a period James spent in a South Wales hospital and turns out to be the inspiration for the book. It examines the treatment he received, the conditions of the hospital workers and – most perturbing of all – the views of a number of the fellow patients he was forced to share a ward with. Let's just say the fact that UKIP got around 20 per cent of the vote in many South Wales valley seats at the recent General Election is entirely consistent with the account here and the interpretation James places on it. The challenge is still how to transform these types of views within the working class and the assumptions that seem to underpin them.

DAP



## Declaration of Principles

*This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.*

### Object

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



# 50 Years Ago

## Los Angeles erupts

FOR A few days the spotlight was switched from the ever present horror of Vietnam and focussed on the United States itself.

Los Angeles, that most modern of cities—if such an outdated word as city can be used to describe a sprawl of over 452 square miles—erupted into violence. In an orgy of looting, arson and killing the Negro population, so often the victims of mob violence, themselves became the mob. The savage details were too well reported to need repeating, but many thousands of troops were needed to crush what amounted to a rebellion. When it was over, needless to say the Negroes were the worst-hit victims.



The suppression of the Negro, lasting for a hundred years after their “liberation,” ranging from murder to petty discrimination, and running through all strata of society, has produced a distrust and hatred that will take a very long time to overcome. At every moment and in every possible way, the Negro is made to feel inferior.

Such a situation, and the fact that it could be changed, must lead to an explosion. Los Angeles has been a modern legend, that personifies the so-called affluent society, the world of mass-produced commodities in profusion. Brash and ugly, a mass of sprawling suburbs and six-lane freeways where public transport has practically disappeared, the Watts-Willowbrook area where the explosion occurred is known as the Black Ghetto. Can anything illustrate the plight of the American Negro more than the use of this medieval word to describe the conditions of workers in an ultramodern city?

The riot was crushed, but as long as hatred between workers remains on such a scale and is added to the normal tensions and frustrations of capitalism, such eruptions will continue.

(from News in Review, *Socialist Standard*, October 1965)

## ACTION REPLAY

### The oval money-spinner

THE STORY goes that in 1823 Rugby was invented when William Webb Ellis picked up the ball and ran with it. This is probably a myth, but the current Rugby World Cup 2015 is named after him. The playing rules of rugby developed after many acrimonious meetings with football (soccer), but unlike football, rugby failed to come to terms with professionalism which led ‘to an historic split between the amateur union and the professional league’ (Mihir Bose, *i* newspaper, 4 September).

Tony Collins novel *The Oval World: A Global History of Rugby* skilfully weaves a story together by including details of matches alongside the wider historical and social picture and comments on how the oval ball has managed to keep Ireland united as one rugby nation when nothing else has been so effective.

However, for a hundred years, rugby has not only tolerated racism but has also arguably encouraged it. New Zealand excluded Maori players when playing the South African team (pre Mandela) but when the Springboks won the World Cup for the first time, Nelson Mandela proudly wore his

Springbok jersey.

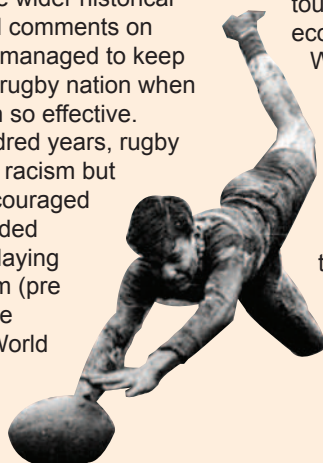
The professional services specialist EY thinks that the current tournament in England will generate £2.2bn of economic activity for the UK and could boost GDP by nearly 1bn. A record 500,000 overseas fans are expected to visit England and Wales for the competition, which is expected to help deliver a near £1bn boost for the UK’s travel and tourism industry, based on the expected fans spending on accommodation and entertainment. The society of independent brewers believes its members could see their sales to pub companies grow by as much as 20 percent equating to 250,000 pints.

Firms such as DHL and Land Rover are among the sponsors supporting the event. However, some more cautious brand experts are worried that the

tournament will not generate the economic activity that football’s World Cup does. A more optimistic view is sounded by World Rugby’s chairman, Bernard Lassett, who says ‘the Rugby World Cup 2015 is set to be a game changer for a sport that continues to experience record growth around the world.’

It seems that professional sport and finance are as inextricably linked as ever.

KEVIN



## FREE

3-month trial subscription to the *Socialist Standard*



For more details about The Socialist Party, or to request a 3-month trial subscription to the *Socialist Standard*, please complete and return this form to **52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.**



☐ Please send me an info pack

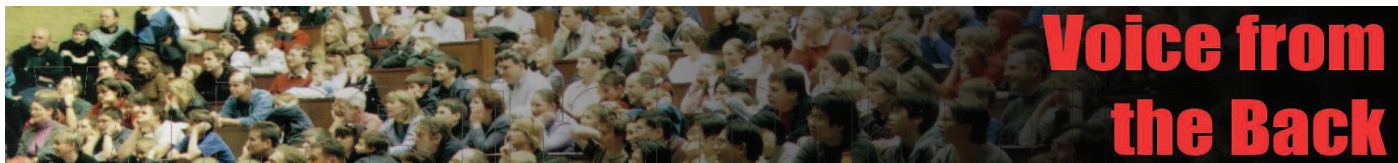
☐ Please send me a trial subscription to the *Socialist Standard*.

Name.....

Address.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Postcode.....





# Voice from the Back

## Hobson's choice

You have found work in the city but need somewhere to live, your choice is limited. 'The shockingly bad rental flats, based mainly in Britain and the US, repeatedly appear online among lists of the worst homes available to rent. In one cheeky advert, a tent in the garden of a property in San Francisco is being advertised for £458 per month, while another ambitious landlord has listed a cupboard in Paddington, west London, for £160 per month. Elsewhere in Rheims, France, a room with a shower and toilet fitted next to the kitchen sink will set tenants back £169 per month, while a horrendously cramped room in Islington, north London, with a kitchen doubling up as a bedroom will set tenants back a staggering £730 per month' (*Daily Mail*, 4 September).

## Embarras de richesses

We produce but do not possess. Indeed, 'for every dollar of wealth created, 93 cents goes to the top 1%' (truth-out.org, 3 September). Members of the owning class can live where they want when they want. In preparation to accommodating King Salman bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia and his huge entourage last month one five star hotel, closed to other guests, was transformed. Crates containing golden mirrors, end tables, lamps and hat racks were unloaded and red carpets 'laid down in hallways and even in the lower parking garage' so that the parasites did not 'have to touch asphalt when departing their custom Mercedes caravan' (*Politico*, 3 September).

## Killing is my business

The Saudi ruling class, backed by the USA, is using armed workers and advanced weaponry to enforce regime change in neighbouring Yemen. Wars raging in the Middle East and elsewhere mean business is good for arms manufactures such as Textron. This Massachusetts-based manufacturer of cluster bombs, helicopters and jets had its stock upgraded recently 'from *neutral*

to *buy* by a Citigroup analyst' (vocatv.com, 4 September). The brutal Saudi regime, which has beheaded more people than the Islamic State so far this year, has used cluster bombs in Yemen.



## Migrant misery

War is undoubtedly one of the main reasons why millions have been, and continue to be, murdered, mutilated or forced to migrate. Over 2000 people have died taking the perilous but profitable for some journey from Libya to Europe. There is money to be made out of such misery: 'with militias controlling large swathes of land, their attentions have turned to the people who cross their territories. The fighters assert they are bringing order to the country as they detain the refugees, yet these people's lives have become valuable commodities to the militias as they try to solidify their positions in the country' (vice.com, 4 September).

## Hell awaits

You have the stuff of migrants' dreams: somewhere to live and a place of work, but neither are secure. Your life is still at risk. Examples of death at work are legion, The BBC reported recently (1 September) that a 'Dundee company has admitted health and safety failings after a worker died while cleaning out a chemical tank ... The 33-year-old was sent in to remove debris from a chemical tank with limited protective clothing in August 2011... Dundee Sheriff Court

heard that Mr Conway was sent into the tank containing volatile chemicals while wearing only trainers, tracksuit bottoms and a t-shirt and fleece.'

## Slowly we rot

Somehow you reach the ever-increasing age at which you can draw your dwindling pension (delayed wages), but are you in any condition to enjoy your retirement? Is a care home on the horizon? 'England's care home regulator has repeatedly failed to act on official warnings from coroners in cases where elderly residents have died unexpectedly, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism has found. The Bureau has examined 23 cases in which coroners warned that people could die in future if care providers did not make changes' (The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2 September).

## Defend the indefensible

This is what the head of the Care Quality Commission said he was not going to do in relation to the above, but the 1% are happy to defend capitalism - at a safe distance. Yet maybe the Egyptian billionaire who 'has offered to buy an island off Italy or Greece in order to rehouse hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Syria and other conflicts' (*Daily Telegraph*, 4 September) is on to something. Come the revolution, any expropriated capitalists who do not want to live in a world of production for use and free access could be accommodated on such an island.



## FREE LUNCH

